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The Nation.

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ITORIAL

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ARE WE REGISTERED?

Voter registration is the organizing principle of the politics of the 1984 elections. What used to be an unexceptionable civic duty is now a movement, for the registration campaign goes beyond the patriotic imperative, into the realm of political struggle. Blacks, Hispanics, women, welfare recipients, retirees—millions of unregistered Americans are signing up in drives conducted by scores of organizations. Their votes, as Jesse Jackson tells his audiences, are stones in the hands of the powerless to bring the powerful down.

Jackson, Ralph Nader, Bella Abzug and some 1,600 students from around the country met at Harvard University over the Lincoln's Birthday weekend to solidify the movement's campus base and map strategies for the next eight months. It was a rousing event, wildly exceeding the expectations of its sponsors (the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group) and promising a season of student activism not seen in America for a decade.

The raw materials of the registration movement are statistics. They show that Reaganites defeated many House and Senate liberals in crucial contests in 1982 by 6,000 votes or less; that the registration of black, poor and student-age voters in the South and in key Northern states could defeat Reagan this year even if he scores the total of his 1980 "landslide"; and that tens of thousands are being signed up each month by such outfits as the Voter Education Project, Project Vote and Human Serve.

Some critics in the movement wonder, with good reason, whether there will be enough good candidates for new voters to vote *for*, rather than against. On the other hand, the registration movement is building an active, principled constituency which will have its own effect on the quality and the programs of the politicians.

KISSINGER REDIVIVUS
Christopher Hitchens

THE FORCE PROJECT US
Michael T. Klare

LETTER FROM EUROPE
Daniel Singer

THE LABOR RACKETEERING BILL
Lance Compa

RADICAL HISTORIANS
Ellen Carol DuBois

'VITA'
Judith Thurman

SUBSIDIZING REAGANISM

WHY LIBERALS SHOULD HATE THE DEFICIT

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

It's good fun to see Treasury Secretary Donald Regan losing his temper at Council of Economic Advisers chairman Martin Feldstein and advising an amused Senate committee to throw away Feldstein's economic report to the President. One is tempted to say, Go it, Don! Go it, Marty!—and bad luck to both of you. Unfortunately, their dispute over budget deficits matters to the rest of us, particularly to blue-collar workers and the constituencies getting the worst treatment in the Reagan era—women, children, minority groups and low-income families.

As a result of 1981's huge tax cuts, the wild escalation in Pentagon appropriations and the consequent increase in interest on the ballooning Federal debt, this year's deficit is estimated to be $180 billion. Unless taxes are raised, Pentagon appetites curbed or both, that amount may well increase to $300 billion in the next five years. Deficits of that size are unprecedented. They worry Wall Street operators and economists of all persuasions, except for the small but vociferous band of supply-siders in the Treasury Department and at the editorial offices of *The Wall Street Journal*, who are encouraged by Eureka College's most eminent economics major, Ronald Reagan.

The conventional case against large and growing deficits is simply stated. If the recovery continues, consumer and corporate demands for credit will rise. So will Treasury's borrowing requirements. As early as the middle of this election year, Paul Volcker and his six obedient colleagues on the Federal Reserve Board might confront an unpleasant choice. Either they can meet

(*Continued on Page 226*)

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LETTERS.

THE INFLUENCE OF AFFLUENCE

New York City

From William Leach's review of my book, *The Poverty of Affluence* ["Critics and Consumers," *The Nation*, Jan. 14], one would have no idea that it includes a critique of the 1960s counterculture and the human potential movement. To be sure, after examining the serious flaws and misconceptions in their philosophies, I consider the ways in which those errors allowed the crucial insights that remained to be dismissed by critics such as Christopher Lasch. But I am as hard on *The Greening of America* or on Abraham Maslow as I am on Lasch.

Similarly, Leach's review gives no indication that a considerable part of my book examines how the consumer orientation to life and the ideology of growth have pervaded our cultural tastes, our personal relations, even our basic vision of the structure of nature and of experience. According to Leach I am interested only in what happens "when people go shopping."

He caricatures my arguments in a number of other places as well, often using quotation marks in misleading ways. Thus he has me saying that we need to be guided by "technocrats" since it is they who understand environmental and human needs; he refers to "'meaningful' sex lives" as if it were my phrase; he turns my brief discussion of the way in which Japanese successes in production raise questions about American assumptions into a simple advocacy of Japanese corporate practice as a model for the good society; he seems to impute to me an absurd sentence about joggers being more political than "fat people who eat Mars bars." (What I say is that there is no evidence that people who jog or engage in other supposedly "narcissistic" activities are less politically engaged, and that as people more aware of the drawbacks of the sedentary consumer life, they may well be *more* active in critical politics.)

Like Christopher Lasch, Leach does not quite come out for unreconstructed consumerism, contenting himself with ridiculing alternatives, asking how I know that consumerism is not the royal road to satisfaction and referring ambiguously to "the image of the benighted consumer [that] broods grimly over most recent commentaries on consumer society." As I said of Lasch in the book, with enemies like this, capitalism does not need friends. *Paul L. Wachtel*

LEACH REPLIES

Brooklyn

The ideological tone of the closing sentence in Paul Wachtel's letter matches the tone that pervades his book. Although there is much in the book worth pondering, the reader should be wary of the evangelical thrust throughout. What I objected to in my review, and what I still forcefully object to, is Wachtel's refusal to consider that the things he most admires may have sprung from the things he most despises. Consumer society is not the total atrocity he imagines it to be; we will not be able to change its faults in any democratic manner until we try to understand both its compelling strengths and its dangers with historical precision.

This brings me to a fundamental question which Wachtel barely addresses in his letter or his book. Who are these consumers that he claims find satisfaction only through consumption? My suspicion is that the only compulsive unhappy consumers he knows are the ones who come to him for therapy, but that kind of evidence can in no way substantiate his sweeping arguments.

William Leach

APOLITICAL FILMS

Bay Head, N.J.

Peter Biskind's review of *Terms of Endearment* ["Films," *The Nation*, Jan. 14] is as ideologically encumbered as was *The New York Times*'s editorial comment about the film *Silkwood*. While the editorial board of *The Times* might feel compelled through self-interest to defend corporate America, Biskind's diatribe against Brooks's film reeks of trendy posturing.

As strange as it may seem, films without political content are possible. Life unfortunately does not always conform to a current "correct" attitude. As Tom Lehrer once observed, "When *correctly* viewed, everything is lewd. I could tell you things about Peter Pan, and the Wizard of Oz is a dirty old man." Don't your editorial writers ever read your movie reviews? *Jane B. Cronin*

THE VIEW FROM SOUTH DAKOTA

Sturgis, S.D.

Enclosed is a money order for $50. I think *The Nation* is the best publication in the country. I am sorry that I have only got two others to subscribe. I am 86 in June, have been through the mill. I don't have a hell of a lot of dough. However, when I ranched on the North Moreau I learned to braid shot-loaded blacksnakes. I just made one for a "movement woman" in Denver. I got $100, so will split with you. I have taken *The Nation* for years, but what endeared it to me was an article by Bob Sherrill about the far right's penetration of the Farm Bureau ["Reaping the Subsidies," Nov. 24, 1969].

As I had relatives in Washington, D.C., I went to see Bob and have corresponded with him since. I also corresponded with Carey McWilliams. I notice *The Nation* refers to the New Right, which is nothing but the old right, the Birchers; but the new guys live in bigger houses and are more diplomatic. As I come from a line of writers and antislavery people down through the Henry Georgers, the Greenbackers, Populists, Nonpartisan Leaguers and Socialists, I smelled the Birchers when they attempted to get state legislatures to ratify their proposed Twenty-third Amendment. I wrote two letters to the press that helped defeat it in South Dakota. It was ratified in Wyoming and seven other states. They were gone for a while, but they combed their hair, washed their faces and kept on. Now they are in the White House. So help me, I never could convince the Democrats about them. Jim Abourezk said, "No danger." McGovern said, "They have problems too." Their problem, however, was McGovern.

Even this fall, the far-left smart guys were telling me the same thing: "No danger, they don't amount to anything." Right now they are tooling up here in South Dakota for two main things: to take out Representative Thomas Daschle, although he isn't much of a person, and to put over the 10 percent income tax to poor and rich alike.

There is one complaint I have about *The Nation*, however. It is common to about all progressive publications, like *Mother Jones*, *The Guardian* and anything east of the Hudson. They don't seem to know that there are food producers who are in real trouble. Prices for cattle, wheat, corn and soybeans have been about half price for a long time. Farmers are being foreclosed and are turning to the right politically. Meanwhile tremendous big wheat companies move in, buy land from busted farmers, plow it up with tractors with 80- to 100-foot drawbars and produce wheat for military and diplomatic purposes. This drys up the towns too.

Since 1968 I have been involved with a group that sued A&P and won $32.7 million in an antitrust action but settled for $10 million. That suit was the last resort for family ranchers who had operated the previous seven years selling below cost of production, getting on by borrowing dough on the appreciated value of their outfits. About twenty-four other cases were kicked out of a Federal court because of a case in which the high court said the damages were not direct but indirect. The damage chain-store price fixing does to cattle raisers is indirect, as cow-calf producers sell to feeders, who sell to packers, who sell carcass beef to stores, who sell it to customers.

The cowman goes bust trying to ride the treadmill. Food prices go up each day, while cattle prices keep going down, to 59 percent of parity. We need an act of Congress that will enable plaintiffs to collect damages, if guilt is proved, be the damages direct or indirect. For this we need nationwide support.

Any nation that doesn't protect and insure its food supply is indeed stupid. I am not talking about cattle barons but about family outfits, the backbone of South Dakota.

Homer Ayres

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EDITORIALS.

Yuri, We Hardly Knew Ye

If Yuri Andropov's fifteen-month leadership of the Soviet nation was anything more than a blip on the world historical screen, it was because of the extraordinary explosion of American enmity in that period. It was Andropov's Russia that was the "focus of evil in the modern world" in the gospel according to Ronald Reagan; it was Andropov's Red Army (and navy and air force) that Reagan moved to surpass with his massive Pentagon budgets. And it was the cities and bases under Andropov's command that became targets of Reagan's new missiles in Europe. At best, Andropov merely held the fort; Reagan laid it siege.

In death—and in his prolonged, presumed *extremis*—Andropov became more interesting than in life. The Western media, which are inclined to subordinate politics to personality, were at last able to discuss the things that really matter: medical crises, marital arrangements and cabals in the corridors of power. For a brief moment, the important

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affairs of great nations could be melodramatized in the familiar situations of *Dynasty*.

Kremlinologists do adore funerals. Their spirits soar as the dirges sound, and when the surviving Politburocrats appear on the parapet of Lenin's tomb, these specialists ascend the very heavens of invention to speculate on the play of politics in Moscow. They pick over the relative position of figures in the funeral cortege like soothsayers examining entrails. They make prophecies based on wild surmise and looming deadlines. And they offer instant analyses with blinding speed—and often embarrassing contradictions.

Thus, *The New York Times*'s Moscow correspondent, Serge Schmemann, wrote in his page 1 story on Saturday, February 11:

> Even after Mr. Andropov's condition became universally obvious, there was not the sort of blatant jockeying for position that arose in the final years before Mr. Brezhnev's death in 1982. . . . The power brokers in the Politburo managed to maintain discipline even in the absence of their chief.

And in *The Times*'s Week in Review section the next day, the same Schmemann wrote:

> The absence of a successor, the mysterious failure of the Central Committee to meet in formal session yesterday, the appointment of Konstantin U. Chernenko—only recently Mr. Andropov's rival for power—to head the funeral commission all spoke of power struggles, fierce debates and shifting coalitions behind the facade of uniformity and ritual.

The torrent of nonsense had only begun. The next day Sovietologists, former diplomats and occasional tourists to Moscow started constructing the mythologies that will attend the new Soviet leader. "He was a dullard," said Malcolm Toon, a retired U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, recalling a meeting in Vienna when Chernenko talked about the weather. Zbigniew Brzezinski, who as Jimmy Carter's national security adviser fashioned the new cold war foreign policy that Reagan has solidified, told *The Times* that Chernenko "struck me as the least dynamic and formidable" of the candidates for leadership, which was "very good for the West."

Kremlinology may be bunk, but it can be dangerous bunk because American attitudes and Administration policies are based on deconstructions of fanciful texts. For many months supposedly savvy experts and officials "read" Yuri Andropov from gossip supplied by various sources: the new Soviet ruler listened to jazz, devoured Jacqueline Susann novels and was as Americanized as a Brooklyn cabbie or a Santa Monica surfer. Of course it was all fantasy, as Edward Jay Epstein reported in a devastating *New Republic* article. But the perception of a Coltrane-digging, hot-dog-chewing Andropov drastically diverted attention from the dangers posed by Reagan's aggressive and provocative policies toward the Soviet Union. Andropov did *not* trust America; he did *not* sympathize with Reagan's political problems; he would *not* blink when Reagan went eyeball-to-eyeball with him along the nuclear front in Europe.

Of all the assessments of Soviet leadership that have issued in the past week, Brzezinski's seems to have the most potential for misuse. The notion that the weakness of one great power is automatically an advantage for the other expresses a sinister and simplistic view of global politics as an Olympic hockey match or a zero-sum game, in which victory—or conquest—is the inevitable result. That is not only a sure sign of failed diplomacy, it is a prescription for nuclear confrontation. It makes more sense to worry about our own incompetent leadership, our own power struggles and the uniformity and rigidity of the White House than to second-, third- and fourth-guess the Kremlin cabals. Now we can see who is on the parapet with Chernenko. But who is standing next to Reagan?

Counting Bodies

The Reagan Administration often defends its continuing military and economic aid to El Salvador with the claim that murders of civilians by right-wing death squads in that country are declining. On January 17, PBS's MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour *featured an exchange on the figures between Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, and Aryeh Neier, vice chairman of Americas Watch, a human rights monitoring group. The reporter was Judy Woodruff. An excerpt follows.*

WOODRUFF: In a report released yesterday, the Administration said that . . . civilian killings reported in the Salvadoran press peaked in October 1980 at more than 800 a month and have dropped in a zigzag fashion to just over 100 a month now. But those findings were disputed by Americas Watch . . . [which] said that a church-affiliated human rights group in El Salvador counted 2,600 dead in the last six months of 1983, an increase over the first half of the year, and an average of 400 dead each month, far higher than the Reagan Administration's figure. . . . How do you account . . . for the enormous discrepancy? . . .

ABRAMS: Well, I would point out, first of all, that the discrepancy is not so enormous if you look at certain human rights organizations. The University of Central America, which is an antigovernment group in El Salvador, has figures very close to ours. We said about 100 killed in December. They said, if I remember right, 106. The reason that . . . others have figures something like five times ours . . . is that they count every battlefield casualty. In other words, if the guerrillas lose fifty people on the battlefield, they count those fifty dead as human rights victims and we don't. . . .

NEIER: The Administration relies entirely on the Salvadoran press. The Salvadoran press is extreme right wing. That part of it which is not extreme right wing was destroyed by the army. One paper was closed when its editor was hacked to death; another paper was closed when army tanks surrounded its building and forced its editor to flee from the country. The remaining newspapers get their information from the government of El Salvador. . . .

The figures that we use are reliable only in the sense that they are a partial account of what's going on. The arch-

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diocese of San Salvador takes testimony from witnesses to killings and from family members of those killed, and they only tabulate a killing when they have firsthand testimony. . . . Abrams's suggestion that these are guerrillas killed on the battlefield is preposterous if you think of only one thing: The archdiocese has tabulated more than 38,000 murders over the last four years. The Administration has never come up with a figure of more than five or six thousand guerrillas, and there are still about that number. . . .

I visited the University of Central America's documentation center on a couple of occasions last week. They do not take testimony from victims. They are aware of . . . the figures of the archdiocese, but they are a documentation center and they clip the Salvadoran press. And it's not surprising that when they clip the Salvadoran press, they come out with the same figures the Administration comes out with when it clips the Salvadoran press.

The Parents Doe

Arthur Caplan's editorial on the Baby Jane Doe case ["Is It a Life?" January 21] prompted this response. Because she does not wish to bring publicity to her three children, the author requested that it be published anonymously.

It happened a long time ago. I think of her every August 16, her birth date, but I don't delude myself wondering how she would be liking her first year of college, or what she would look like, or how she would walk and speak. If she had lived she wouldn't have gone to college or been able to walk or communicate. So although the pain and hurt of delivering that baby is still with me, a shadow upon my soul, I don't really think about her in an active way. Until I read about other babies and parents, other Family Does who have delivered babies who will never be well nor have the intelligence they need to function or to learn or to become self-sufficient. And I am astonished, as I follow the most recent case, that so little attention has been given to the parents of that baby.

Let me tell you what it's like to deliver a severely damaged child.

My husband and I are New Yorkers, and our baby was full-term and delivered at a small, sophisticated Manhattan hospital. She came very fast. I was awake. After the nurses hurried to suck the mucus from her lungs I heard a thread of a cry; it did not remotely resemble the lusty birth wail of her sibling. I sensed trouble when the obstetrician said, in a harsh voice, "Show the baby to the mother." I saw a tiny, red-faced girl, just five pounds, with brown hair and eyes, who was gasping for breath and had a twisted right wrist. I closed my eyes. I guess the nurses thought I had dozed off, exhausted, because one of them said, "And the mother's so pretty." Then I knew my baby and I were in trouble.

My husband and I would have done anything to save that baby's life, to make her better. In the hours that followed we had hope that operations could be performed: we consoled each other with stories of remarkable children we had both known who were retarded or had birth defects.

However, our hopes were soon dashed. When the baby was moved to a large teaching hospital, we learned she was a "tri-somi." She had an extra chromosome, on the eighteenth pair, and she would not live more than a few months—at the outside, a year. Nothing could be done to fix her heart and lungs or her wrist or her inability to suck. "This is one of nature's lousy tricks," a young resident told us.

But we were the parents. We were responsible. Perfectly healthy people in our late 20s who had produced one normal child, we had now delivered a baby who was "a chromosomal aberration." Nothing in my experience had prepared me for the feelings of shame and failure that descended upon me, and nothing in my life since has matched the depression and helplessness we felt while we waited for our baby to die.

The baby's pain and suffering were our pain and suffering. I stayed home to take care of her; my husband went to work. We met with social workers and doctors and tried to figure out how to manage the financial responsibility. After the hospital had completed its tests, we had our baby moved to a nursing home. We lived from day to day in a Kafka-like present, too paralyzed to contemplate the future, which included tests to determine if we were "genetic mosaics" (we weren't) or if our first child was abnormal (she wasn't), and conferences on how and when we might be able to have another child.

When the baby finally died, three months after her birth, the hospital asked if they could perform an autopsy and we consented. The list of abnormalities filled both sides of an 8½-by-11-inch sheet of paper, single spaced. I looked at it and wept, then put it away. I told my husband about it a few days later; he didn't ask to see it, and although we live in the house we occupied then, I have no idea where I hid it.

While that baby lived she was never "alone in the world," as the petition filed on Baby Jane Doe's behalf claimed she was. We cared for her and faced our responsibilities. Luckier than some other Does, we had no choice but to wait. However, those other Does are not shirking their responsibilities. They are trying to figure out, sanely and rationally, what will be best for their babies. They do not need squads of government inspectors or lawyers or judges to tell them what to do. The squads and lawyers and judges will have no part in the raising of these Baby Does, and it is inappropriate for them to be part of the agonizing decisions. In the rare cases where parents behave irresponsibly, there are trained, compassionate doctors to make those decisions.

After the babies die, the issue is not closed. Our children will have to undergo amniocentesis and prenatal testing because there has been a "genetic failure" in our family. And they will know what to do, just as we did. They will not need a Big Brother to guide them.

Some events in life are simply so personal, so private that compassion and good sense demand they be left within the circle of family and family doctors. Delivering a Baby Jane Doe is such an event. The Parents Doe should be left to work out their enormous difficulties as best they can.

Alone.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Even before the Kissinger commission went off with a deafening report on January 11, there had been writhings and gurglings in the black lagoon. Now the surface has been broken once again by that hideous head. An Administration devoid of talent in foreign affairs has been forced to call upon the private policy, and the shadow State Department, of the flying doctor.

Viewed purely as a tactical achievement, Kissinger's re-emergence commands respect. When he was appointed to chair the President's commission on Central America, he was denounced by those on Reagan's right as an architect of appeasement, a sellout and a prestidigitator. In a few short months, he has silenced his critics in that quarter. By displaying his single greatest talent (the flattery and indulgence of Presidents) and by giving the White House what it wanted (a charter, however qualified, for continued intervention) he has mended a long stretch of fence. At the hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 7, he almost had Jesse Helms eating out of his paw.

Kissinger has also made headway with the formerly suspicious neoconservatives. If you turn to pages 12 and 13 of the Macmillan edition of his report, you can read a description of the great hopes for democracy in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica. Only the government of Nicaragua is out of touch with its people's aspirations for popular sovereignty. If you then turn to pages 13 and 14 of the State Department's Annual Report on Human Rights, published on February 10 under the aegis of the extraordinary Elliott Abrams, you find a summary of the same argument—often employing the very same words.

Staffing and infighting have, as ever, played a decisive role in Kissinger's renaissance. Kissinger Associates, the bogus New York consulting firm which generates the income and patronage for his private foreign policy, is a partnership with former Under Secretary of State William D. Rogers and Brent Scowcroft, Reagan's choice to chair an "impartial" commission on the MX missile. Among the friends of Kissinger Associates is Winston Lord, a former head of policy planning at the State Department and now president of the Council on Foreign Relations. Together with Rogers, Lord acted as senior counselor to the Kissinger commission. It had eleven counselors, most of them amateurs; for Henry to have scored one-fifth of them as business colleagues or former subordinates was not a bad start.

Kissinger associates are scattered elsewhere in the Administration. Lawrence Eagleburger, his former chief of staff, is Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Peter Rodman is on the State Department's Policy Planning Council. Helmut Sonnenfeldt has gone the other way, leaving public service to become a corporate consultant. Grisly as this revolving-door team may be, it easily surpasses the sleepwalking combo of George Shultz and Robert McFarlane.

While traveling in Central America, Kissinger took his own security men in addition to those provided by the thoughtful taxpayers. In that image of power, one sees the emergence of a policy within a policy and a team within a team.

Those who object to the foregoing analysis fall back on the jargon of "conditionality." After all, did not the commission preserve its "bipartisan" fiction by recommending that U.S. aid to the region be made conditional on advances in human rights and democracy? Last month, having welcomed the committee's report, the President eviscerated it by reiterating the veto of conditionality for El Salvador he issued last November. He thus dispensed with even token certification, behind which he had become accustomed to concealing his policy. Did Henry Kissinger spring to the defense of this bipartisan plank, so callously kicked away from his makeshift platform? He did not. Questioned on the point by Senator Paul Tsongas on February 7, he said: "I would rather address the other question, Is there any reason to believe the Administration will embrace this [conditionality]? . . . Whether that is done with enthusiasm or under the pressure of necessity is really more an esthetic question."

An esthetic question. An *esthetic* question. This is a fresh way to evaluate Roberto d'Aubuisson and the Guatemalan generals. In reply to a question from Senator Joseph Biden, Kissinger said he "would oppose the use of American military intervention in Salvador to undo the consequences of a right-wing coup." In reply to Senator Claiborne Pell, he called the *contras* "freedom fighters." He shifted slightly in his seat when asked about his report's suggestion that "Spanish tradition did not lead people naturally toward democracy in Central America." He lied about the extent to which the Contadora nations had endorsed him. These were only esthetic questions, after all.

Kissinger gave Ronald Reagan an endorsement for military counterrevolution in Central America, and decorated it with "ifs" and "buts" about human rights and economic aid. Many Democrats were fooled. The President was not. The President accepted the main recommendation and promptly dumped the ifs and buts in the trash. Kissinger did not demur. This is statecraft—moreover, it is tasteful and esthetic statecraft.

Toward the end of Kissinger's testimony, Senator Christopher Dodd asked him why, in all the 2,800 pages of his memoirs, he never mentioned the vital importance of Central America to the United States. Kissinger replied, rather peevishly, that between 1969 and 1974 he had bigger things on his mind. Pressed on the point, he snapped:

"At that time Central America was quiet."

Quiet, was it? In 1971, when Kissinger was national security adviser, he acquiesced in Somoza's rewrite of the Nicaraguan Constitution, allowing the despot to remain in office by extending his term. In 1972 the United States flew Col. Arturo Molina back to El Salvador from Taiwan to put down José Napoleón Duarte, who had been robbed of a victory in the presidential elections. What Kissinger means is that Central America was unheard of, uncared for and above all "containable." It is a disgrace even to some liberals that they

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came to regard the region as critical only when it ceased to be docile (Robert Strauss take note). But such calculations are routine with the head of Kissinger Associates. He knows Central America as well now as he did then, and cares for it exactly as much. To him, the countries and people there are expendable in his plans for a return to power. As he put it in his book on Metternich, *A World Restored*:

> So agile was Metternich's performance that it was forgotten that its basis was diplomatic skill and that it left fundamental problems unsolved, that it was manipulation and not creation.

DRAWING BY DAVID LEVINE

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ARTICLES.

INTERVENTION BUDGET

May the Force Project Us

MICHAEL T. KLARE

In his just-released budget report for the 1985 fiscal year, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger concedes that the United States "should not be the world's policeman." But, he continues, it needs "to reassume a leadership role recognized by our allies and friends, and our foes and potential enemies."

That turns out to be a very expensive "but." The report calls for a massive buildup of America's capability to intervene in foreign countries. While total U.S. military spending authority is slated to increase by about 13 percent in real dollars, spending what the Pentagon calls "force projection" will shoot up as much as 34 percent, probably the biggest increase in this category since the beginning of the Vietnam War.

The buildup is necessary, according to Weinberger, because of mounting instability in the Third World. "Both an expansion of U.S. interests in the Third World and an increase in Third World conflicts," he said, "have forced us to focus more attention there." The developing nations purchase about 30 percent of U.S. exports, he explains, "and we depend heavily on some of these nations for strategic minerals and energy resources." Accordingly, "our economy and the economies of our allies are . . . especially susceptible to disruption from conflicts far from our borders."

Weinberger acknowledges that such conflicts have many causes, including "economic fluctuations and grievances," but he insists that most of the blame lies with the Soviet Union, which seeks to "exploit the vulnerabilities of developing nations." Unless it's resisted, Moscow's subversion will proliferate: "President Reagan has confronted the paradox of peace—that to preserve it, the peacemaker must be prepared to use force, and use it successfully."

Not only must the United States be prepared to use force, Weinberger says, it "must be prepared to dispatch forces promptly to any of a number of regions around the world—possibly simultaneously." Not surprisingly, existing interventionary forces cannot perform this mission.

Certainly, the Rapid Deployment Force cannot do the job by itself. It was formed during the Carter Administration as a "peacekeeping" force and was intended primarily for use in the Persian Gulf. Because the United States faces threats all over the world, Weinberger says, it requires a much larger interventionary capability. "Grenada reinforced a lesson learned from the 1982 war in the Falklands," he reports. "We must not only structure our forces to cope with potential contingencies that we can foresee but must also prepare ourselves with the wherewithal to deal with the 'unforeseen contingency.'"

To meet all those contingencies, Weinberger's defense budget proposes an across-the-board expansion of all U.S. intervention forces: the Army's light divisions and Special Forces, the Marine Corps' amphibious arm, the Navy's carrier battle groups and sealift fleet and the Air Force's airlift and tactical combat squadrons. Although the Pentagon does not group all the expenditures together, some indication of the scale of the buildup is provided by the allocations for the airlift and sealift units, which would jump from $5.6 billion in 1984 to $7.5 billion, a 34 percent increase. Other categories of force projection expenditures include:

§ *Carrier battle groups* $5.3 billion for modernization of existing carriers and procurement of CG-47 (Aegis cruisers) and DDG-51 escort vessels. Another half-billion dollars is sought for reactivating the Missouri, a sister battleship to the New Jersey, now deployed off the coast of Lebanon.

§ *Airlift forces* $2.9 billion for procurement of C-5B and KC-10 transports, and $130.9 million for development of the proposed C-17 cargo aircraft.

§ *Amphibious assault ships and support vessels* $1.1 billion for procurement of LHD-1 and LSD-41 amphibious vessels and TAO-187 fleet oilers.

§ *Special operations forces* $205 million for procurement of MC-130H Combat Talon planes and HH-60D/E Nighthawk helicopters. These low-flying aircraft are specially designed for parachute drops and supply missions behind enemy lines—precisely the sort of operations being conducted by the U.S.-supported *contras* in Nicaragua.

Other military hardware—helicopters, tanks, troop carriers and artillery for the Army and Marine Corps—would consume billions of dollars more. Some of this equipment is intended for European battlefields but the emphasis on Third World threats permeates the wish list.

For example, the budget proposes a new Army division (the first to be formed since the end of the Vietnam War) intended specifically for operations in the Third World. It is the first of five light infantry divisions, each with 10,000 soldiers, that the Pentagon plans to field over the next ten years. According to Army Secretary John O. Marsh Jr., these units could be moved overseas in only four days; it takes eleven days to transport a regular division.

Weinberger's requests must be approved by Congress, of course, and if past experience is any guide, the legislators will trim them by $5 billion to $10 billion, holding the total 1984-85 increase to 5 or 6 percent after inflation. Unless Congress is prepared to challenge the basic thrust of the Reagan program, however, that reduction will not retard the Administration's drive to expand its interventionary apparatus. By shifting funds from one category to another and stretching out procurement of a given item over several years, the Pentagon can adjust to such a cutback without significantly modifying its long-term plans. If Congress is

Michael T. Klare, The Nation*'s defense correspondent, is a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies and the author of several books on U.S. military policy.*

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to deter military adventures like those in Grenada and Lebanon, it must target its cuts to the force projection programs I have described. □

LETTER FROM EUROPE

Auto Workers and 'Sniffing Planes'

DANIEL SINGER

As the year opened in Paris, two stories dominated the news, one of them sad, the other funny. The first occurred at the Talbot auto plant in Poissy, just outside the capital. Nearly 200 people were hurt in clashes between workers and foremen backed by management. Police were called in to avert further bloodshed. The violence took place against a backdrop of disputes within leftist unions triggered by the government's blundering attempt to "restructure" industry—that is, to act as the manager of the capitalist crisis.

The other story might be called the comedy of the "sniffing planes," to borrow the superb sobriquet coined by *Le Canard Enchaîné*, the Paris satirical weekly. It involved fraudulent science and stolen documents and would have made a good Inspector Clouseau caper. Yet it also had a serious side: yesterday's conservative rulers, the preachers of private enterprise who are so quick to condemn Socialist inefficiency, had squandered millions of dollars in public funds on an enterprise straight out of the comic strips and then concocted a clumsy Nixonian cover-up.

Both stories are unfinished. Both were probably difficult to comprehend from the snippets that appeared in the American press. I will try to put them in perspective, proceeding deliberately from the tragic to the farcical.

Tragedy at Talbot

The riots at the Talbot plant were a unique event and a portent. On the one hand, management there is unusually aggressive and reactionary; it loudly proclaims the divine rights of property. With the help of a puppet union, it runs its factories like army camps, tolerating no back talk from the unskilled, predominantly immigrant, labor force. Talbot is also the weakest division in the Peugeot group, which has lost $776 million in the past three years, and thus the one most threatened by corporate belt-tightening. On the other hand, the French auto industry is in trouble, and a major shake-up is brewing. Many other sectors—coal, steel, shipbuilding—are gripped by a deep malaise. Having accepted the logic of capitalism, the Socialist government is discovering where it leads. The flare-up at Poissy could be a useful warning.

Although the name may be unfamiliar, Talbot is an established firm. Originally known as Simca, it was connected with Italy's Fiat Motor Company until World War II (unkind souls claim it acquired its predilection for fascist methods of management during that period). Simca was part of Chrysler's short-lived European empire from 1958 to 1978, when Peugeot bought it and changed the name. By any name, the firm has been one of the Big Four of the French auto industry. The undisputed Number One was, and is, Renault—a success story of nationalization. Taken over by the government after World War II because its owner had collaborated with the Germans, it produces more than half the cars built in France. In 1983, with nearly 14 percent of the Western European market, it was Europe's top seller, just ahead of Ford. The merger of the three other French firms is of more recent vintage and quite a revealing story.

In the 1970s, when Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was President, Citroën faced bankruptcy. The government could have let the state-owned Renault take it over but instead gave the privately owned Peugeot a loan to buy the ailing firm. The rescue operation was a success: Citroën recovered, and Peugeot, its appetite for expansion whetted, purchased Chrysler's European subsidiaries. Only the miracle didn't happen twice. International competition had intensified and top management committed a series of blunders, notably, merging the sales forces of Citroën and Talbot too rapidly. The output of Talbot cars dropped from 450,000 in 1981 to fewer than 200,000 last year. Before the riot in Poissy, there were reports that Peugeot wanted to close down its most recent acquisition.

Its reasons went beyond the financial. The system of worker exploitation was breaking down. It had been a simple arrangement: a caste of supervisors (former paratroopers and colonial soldiers) placed over an army of unskilled foreign laborers. More than half the 15,000 workers at the Poissy plant are immigrants, a third of them Moroccans, imported straight from the African countryside. These "guest workers" began arriving in the late 1950s; eager for jobs and innocent of management's motives, most of them joined the company union, ironically named the Confederation of Free Unions (C.S.L.). Those brave enough to join one of the independent leftist unions were harassed and sometimes sacked under various pretexts. Spies and stool pigeons were everywhere, not only on the shop floor but also in the hostels or local council houses where the workers stayed.

These banana republics could flourish only in a politically friendly climate. The electoral victory of the left spelled their doom. The year 1982 saw the revolt of the wretched: at the Citroën works at Aulnay and the Talbot plant at Poissy, the spell of the puppet unions was broken. In last year's elections for workers' delegates at Poissy, the C.S.L., which traditionally won by large margins, got only 34 percent of the vote. The Communist-dominated General Confederation of Labor (C.G.T.), rewarded for its past resistance to management, came in first with 42 percent of the vote; the radical French Democratic Labor Confederation (C.F.D.T.) mustered less than 10 percent.

When imported slaves begin to talk of dignity, robots become an attractive alternative. In the middle of last year,

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s European correspondent.*

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management asked the government for permission to lay off workers at Poissy (in France, all companies must receive government approval for staff reductions). The authorities allowed Peugeot to cut the work force through early retirement and attrition, but refused to permit the firing of nearly 3,000 other workers. There followed a trial of strength between workers and management, with almost daily skirmishes at the plant. On December 17, the government produced what it boasted of as its "exemplary" Christmas present. It made a deal with Peugeot, allowing *only* 1,905 more people to be sacked. The government sought to soften the blow by offering retraining programs to those who lost their jobs. In what seemed a clever stroke, it got Jack Ralite, the Communist Minister of Employment, to endorse the package, expecting that the C.G.T. leadership at Poissy would be induced to go along.

But the rank and file doesn't always follow marching orders. Nora Tréhel, who succeeded her husband as president of the C.G.T. local after he was elected to the Poissy City Council, is popular among workers, and they listened to her make the case. But the mostly illiterate foreign workers were not taken in by glittering promises of retraining. As one Moroccan put it, "My son just out of technical school can't find a job and you expect me, who can't read or write, to be trained for one in six months?" Some immigrants, concerned about growing xenophobia in France, talked of accepting a lump sum payment that would enable them to return home. Others refused to yield without a fight. They rallied behind the C.F.D.T. and its slogan, "No Firings."

The C.F.D.T. called a sit-in for just before Christmas but did not have the support of all the workers. The C.G.T. leadership was torn, but hinted that its members should return to their jobs. For management it was a golden opportunity to avenge two years of humiliation under the Socialists (the top manager at Peugeot, Jacques Calvet, used to be a colleague of Giscard d'Estaing). Having received approval for the cutbacks, the capitalist bosses now had the blessing of a Socialist government.

After days of sporadic work stoppages, and with the leftist unions split, management brought in C.S.L. thugs from other company factories in the Paris area to evict the strikers. Heavy wrenches and slingshots loaded with nuts and bolts were some of the weapons used in the bloody confrontation. By the time the plant was cleared by riot police on January 5, it was a miracle that there had been no fatalities. The evacuation was nevertheless a sad end to a story of liberation which had begun two years earlier with the awakening of immigrant workers.

Following the incident there were sharp recriminations. Socialists and Communists alike accused the C.F.D.T. of "extremism." Edmond Maire, the union's leader, hit back, accusing the government of using the Communist union as a "transmission belt" for its policies.

At Poissy the workers are back on the job, their battle temporarily over. But coal mines in the North and steelworks in Lorraine are also scheduled for restructuring. Optimists say Talbot will serve as a lesson, a sort of "what's not to be done." The government announced it would consult with all affected unions before implementing any restructuring plans, and the Communist Party is taking a much tougher stand than it did at Poissy. But skeptics point out that the government can't follow a socialist employment policy while extolling profits and praising private enterprise. Once you accept the logic of capitalism, you have little room to maneuver. Both sides agree that the immediate future looks grim.

Having again been a messenger of gloom, I would like to share with you, for a change, a moment of comedy.

The Farce of the 'Sniffing Planes'

Ridicule does not kill, but it leaves bruises. The millions of dollars of public money wasted on two inventions that were supposedly capable of detecting petroleum deposits would have worried French taxpayers briefly and been forgotten if *Le Canard Enchaîné* had not turned the annoying affair into the subject of a lampoon and nicknamed the unfortunate inventions *avions renifleurs*, "sniffing planes." The French press has no tradition of investigative journalism, so *Le Canard* has occasionally filled the gap. In 1979 it revealed that Giscard, then President, had received diamonds from the Central African Republic's ruler, Jean-Bedel Bokassa. The weekly first mentioned the inventions last June. In December its pages were splashed with a satirical saga about two crooks who took the government-controlled oil company, Elf-Aquitaine, and its holding company, ERAP, for a costly ride.

The story begins in 1976. Its protagonists are an odd couple: the jovial Italian Aldo Bonassoli, a clever radio technician and self-styled "professor of nuclear physics," and the sad-looking Alain de Villegas, an authentic Belgian Count. The latter may not have accomplished much since obtaining his engineering degree years ago, but he had connections with the Pan-European Union, a group of anticommunist crusaders with headquarters in Brussels. Hence, he had contacts in various intelligence services and influential friends in prominent circles in Spain and South Africa, among other places. He could rely on the backing of Philippe de Weck, then president of one of Switzerland's financial giants, the Union des Banques Suisses, and of France's veteran conservative politician Antoine Pinay, former Prime Minister.

With such important friends, the Count and *il professore* were welcomed at Elf when they appeared offering a magical device that could detect the presence of oil miles beneath the surface of the earth or the ocean. They showed their hosts two complicated instruments. One was called Delta; its inventors claimed it could locate petroleum deposits from a plane flying at an altitude of 20,000 feet. The other, called Omega, would then be taken to the site, where it would record images on a video screen which, when analyzed, would reveal the depth, breadth and quantity of the deposits.

Armed with these marvelous discoveries, France would conquer the world—or at least outsmart the Anglo-Saxons and all their new technology. The instruments were kept top secret. Giscard was informed at once, early in June 1976; his

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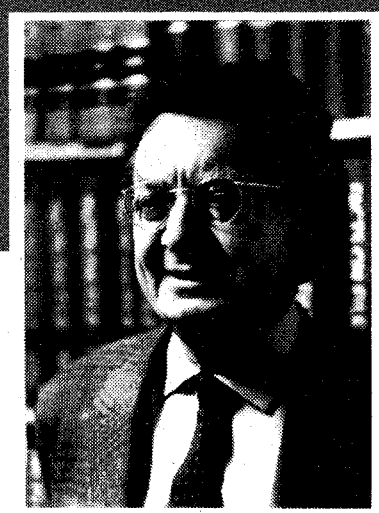

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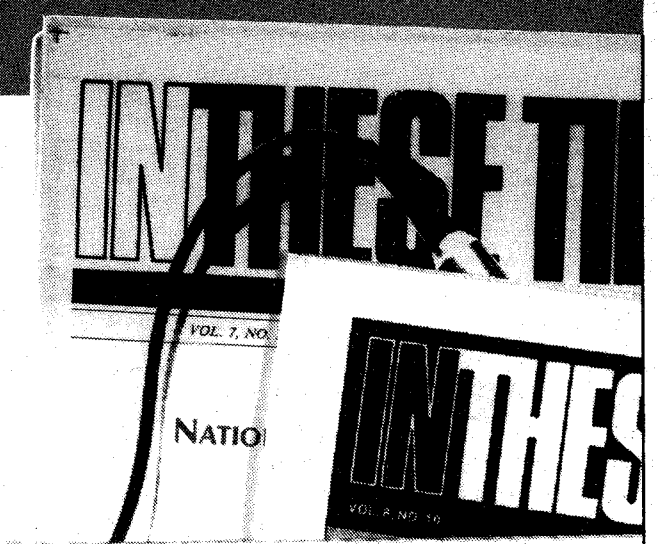

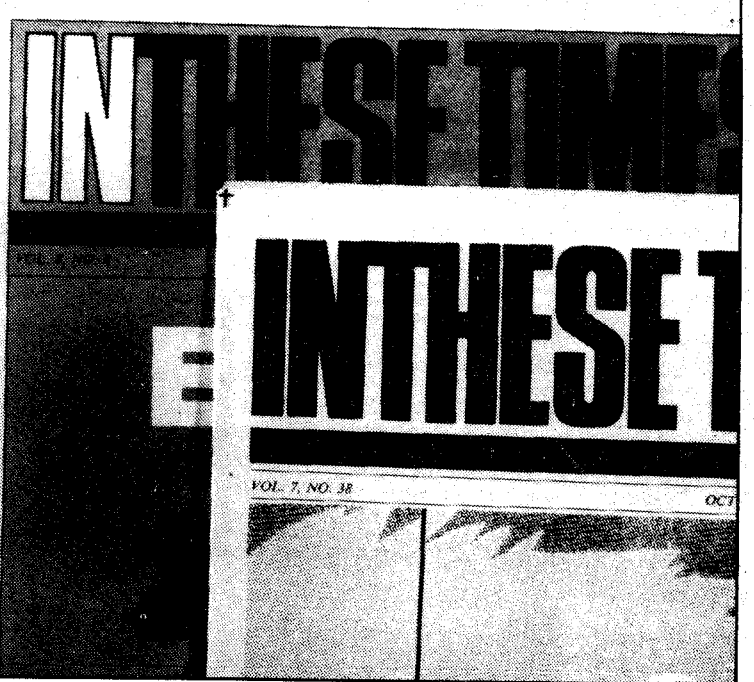

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new Prime Minister, Raymond Barre, was not told until four months later, when he was needed to waive various currency restrictions in order to transfer funds abroad. Elf made a down payment of 200 million Swiss francs—more than $80 million—as part of its provisional one-year contract with Fisalma Inc., a company incorporated in Panama for the inventors by their Swiss banker.

The first results of the collaboration were both dazzling and troubling. The pictures and graphs produced by the machine were impressive, and they jibed with the surveys made by the company using more orthodox methods of detection (apparently no one was curious about that coincidence). But the drillings begun on the exclusive advice of Delta and Omega in southwestern France and in South Africa produced no oil. Worse still, the government's partners refused to disclose how the devices worked.

Nevertheless, the government was hooked. In June 1978, a new agreement was signed and 250 million Swiss francs—about $130 million—was handed over to the inventors, with more to come when oil deposits were discovered. The company opened offices on the Riviera, in Paris and at a villa outside the capital. It purchased airplanes and equipment for its laboratory, at the Rivieren castle near Brussels. The pictures continued to be perfect but, alas, the drillings yielded nothing. The promoters remained as secretive as ever. Finally, French authorities became suspicious and did what they should have done at the beginning: they checked the credentials of the men. They also hired Jules Horowitz, head of research at the French Atomic Energy Commission, to examine the system. In May 1979 he did so.

One of Omega's talents was the ability to "see" through walls. So Horowitz placed an object in an adjoining room to test if Omega could register it. After two failures, Horowitz suggested using a metal ruler as the test object. Without telling *il professore*, he bent it into a V at the last moment. On Omega's screen it appeared straight. The game was up. A month later another experiment confirmed the fraud. While testing the Omega equipment, technicians discovered that the images on its screen had come not from the outside but from a projector inside the machine.

De Weck agreed to turn over all the company's assets to Elf, but the government's losses will still total at least $100 million. Throughout the incident, the government gave the impression that it was more concerned with covering its tracks than with recovering its money. In France the finances of state and quasi-public bodies are audited by the Cour des Comptes. Its members, known as magistrates, are promoted strictly according to seniority as a way of insuring their political independence. In 1979, the magistrate in charge of the ERAP accounts, François Giquel, began noticing some anomalies. One expenditure climbed from 3 million to nearly 200 million francs in two years. Thereupon he was told by the President that there were special circumstances in the case: military secrets were involved. After all, Delta could be used to spot submarines underwater. He was allowed to continue his audit but was sworn to secrecy. The government never wavered in its insistence that military security was involved, that the phony toys of the Count and *il professore* had to be guarded from foreign spies. And so the plot changed. What had been a thriller became a cross between Gogol's *The Inspector-General* and Olsen and Johnson's *Hellzapoppin*.

Even after the Socialists took power in 1981, the secret was well kept. Before retiring the following year, Bernard Beck, president of the Cour des Comptes and a political ally of Giscard, shredded the three documents in the audit office's possession relating to the devices, as well as Giquel's original copy. The veil was finally lifted just before this past Christmas. The junior Secretary for the Treasury publicly accused Beck of *forfaiture* (literally "abuse of authority," but the connotations are strong) for destroying the documents. In the same week, *Le Canard* came out with its story. Sensing the potential damage to his reputation, Giscard counterattacked on television. The Socialist government claims the documents on the case have vanished, he said, but that is untrue. Dramatically, he produced his own copy of the Giquel report, like a rabbit from a hat, adding that former Prime Minister Barre had two more copies. As soon as the documents were returned, the government published the full report. The facts were so damaging to Giscard that he made a second TV appearance, in January. His performance was most odd. Contemptuously dismissing the questions of two journalists, Giscard criticized President François Mitterrand for "having allowed his predecessor to be attacked," an act of *lèse-majesté* that made him unfit to lead the nation.

Many questions about the sniffing planes affair remain

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unanswered. Why weren't even the most elementary precautions taken from the start? Did the plotters have "moles" within Elf-ERAP feeding them information about its explorations and plans? Did they have accomplices within the establishment pressing the government to keep it hush-hush? What happened to the money? Not all the government funds were spent on equipment or expenses, so where did the rest of it go? To shady "anticommunist crusaders" abroad? To French political parties? Why did Giscard have the documents in his possession? Does the right consider the state its personal property and the Socialists intruders who are not even entitled to see secret documents?

Giscard and company's shiny image of efficiency was tarnished by the revelations. Though they seem to have been fools rather than knaves, they were nevertheless discredited, and the Socialists may enjoy a good laugh at their expense.

But they should not laugh too loudly. They will not be judged by the follies of their predecessors but by their own ability to deal with the current economic crisis—to carry out a different restructuring. However hard one sniffs, one cannot detect a socialist alternative to capitalist failures. This could be a year of reckoning for the French left—and one of great strain within its ranks. □

THE LABOR RACKETEERING BILL

Sounds Nice, But It's Antiunion

LANCE COMPA

The labor racketeering bill now before Congress has juggled the traditional lineup of labor's friends and foes. Among those favoring the measure, formally titled the Labor-Management Racketeering Act, are seventy-five senators, the dissident Teamsters for a Democratic Union and A.F.L.-C.I.O. president Lane Kirkland. Opposing it are leaders of the conservative building trade unions, liberal Democrats in the House and civil libertarians. Under the provisions of the bill, a lawbreaking union leader would be removed from office for ten years upon the date of a trial court conviction; in contrast, current law imposes a five-year debarment only after the final appeal has been rejected.

Last June, the Senate passed the bill by a unanimous vote. The principal sponsors were Orrin Hatch of Utah and Sam Nunn of Georgia; both men consistently draw low ratings for their voting records on labor issues from the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s Committee on Political Education. But Edward Kennedy, who draws high approval ratings, was a co-sponsor of the bill, along with several other Democratic liberals.

With that kind of backing, the bill seemed assured to pass quickly in the House, but it met unexpected resistance in the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations. Chairman William Clay and a number of leading progressive Democrats who normally support the labor federation were troubled by the bill's implications and are scrutinizing it.

Hatch and Nunn were reportedly incensed by the delay and have vowed to block Senate votes on any legislation that originated in the Clay subcommittee until their bill gets to the House floor. Meanwhile, some trade unionists have had second thoughts and are disassociating themselves from the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s stand. This group is centered around J.C. Turner, president of the International Union of Operating Engineers, a blunt leader of the George Meany mold but without the latter's rigidity. Turner's reputation for honesty is unblemished.

The term "labor racketeering" immediately puts unions on the defensive. It is difficult to argue against a bill that would prevent convicted union leaders from clinging to power during the lengthy appeals process. Nevertheless, the bill also raises serious questions relating to civil liberties, discrimination and the role of the Federal government in union affairs.

Advocates of the bill call it an important reform, but it is just a slight adjustment to the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959, which first injected the Federal government deeply into union affairs. That law debars officials who have been convicted of violating the statute's requirement for reporting union finances as well as those who have committed any number of offenses unrelated to union affairs: robbery, burglary, assault, drug violations and the like. The five-year debarment excludes the official not only from his own union but from any other union or "any group dealing with any labor organization." It is not limited to national union figures; officers and stewards of the approximately 60,000 local unions in the United States are included.

The Landrum-Griffin Act has many other restrictive provisions. The act dictates the content of union constitutions and bylaws. It decrees how dues increases must be implemented. It prescribes internal disciplinary procedures. It establishes the frequency of local and national union elections and procedures for removing union officers, and regulates the conduct of those elections. It gives the Secretary of Labor the power to send Federal agents to investigate union affairs "when he believes it necessary"—a power the Reagan Administration plans to invoke to conduct nearly 2,000 audits of union finances this year, compared with 212 in 1980.

The labor racketeering bill expands the list of crimes punishable by debarment and of posts from which a guilty unionist is excluded. But the bill sets up a double standard for labor and management. While banishing union transgressors to the outer darkness, it shows no similar concern for top corporate officials who, though convicted of crimes not related to labor activity, are permitted to keep their jobs. Those corporate labor relations officials convicted of paying bribes, taking kickbacks or signing sweetheart deals are covered by the bill, but they can simply move to another department in the company to preserve their

Lance Compa is a union attorney based in Washington, D.C.

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employment. Union officers have no such escape hatch.

The labor racketeering bill also has troubling implications for civil liberties. Summarily barring someone from union office for conduct that is unrelated to union activities is unjust. What's more, by starting the suspension at the date of conviction, the bill narrows the exercise of judicial discretion in sentencing. For example, the judge who presided in the trial last year in which teamster president Roy Williams was found guilty of attempting to bribe a senator compelled Williams to resign in exchange for a lighter sentence. Finally, civil libertarians criticize the bill's presumption that all judicial appeals are frivolous or dilatory. There are often valid and important objections to a conviction: vague and overbroad statutory language, search and seizure abuses, entrapment and other due-process issues.

The labor racketeering bill makes a passing nod at this problem, requiring the union to hold a convicted official's salary in escrow while his appeal is pending. But that provision forces a union to pay two salaries for one job and raises the prospect of internal union conflict if the appeal succeeds and the union has two individuals contending for the same post.

Kirkland swung the federation's support behind the bill because he is rightly concerned that the labor movement—already reeling from employee givebacks, plant closings and unionbusting drives—is vulnerable to a broad legislative attack from the White House and the Senate. He and his closest advisers decided to take the high ground on the labor racketeering bill in hopes of warding off future thrusts against labor.

The trouble is that what appears to be the high ground is a morass. The bill's sweeping language places all union leaders under suspicion. It replays the old themes of big, bad Big Labor, emphasizing the need for more government restraint on unions at a time when the labor movement, in the wake of PATCO's destruction, the Greyhound defeat and massive labor law violations by employers, should be pushing for a public debate on workers' rights to organize and bargain in this society.

As it is, the few rights workers have are not being protected. The National Labor Relations Board has become a tool of management against union organizing campaigns. Moreover, recent hearings by the Clay subcommittee revealed that Reagan's Labor Department has failed to enforce Landrum-Griffin provisions requiring companies to report their use of antiunion consultants, while it has stepped up enforcement of sections of the act applying to unions. Given that record, many unionists question Kirkland's priorities.

Why, ask some leaders of A.F.L.-C.I.O.-affiliated unions, should the federation curry favor with the likes of Orrin Hatch and Sam Nunn when not one pro-labor bill has reached the floor of the Senate since the demise of the labor law reform bill six years ago? Why should convicted corporate officials be allowed to keep their jobs while union officials guilty of the same offenses are punished by debarment? Acceding to this bill is tantamount to saying, Stop me before I kill again! It only strengthens the hand of antiunion politicians and employers who are pushing labor into a corner.

There is no excuse for corruption in the labor movement, but unions need not be defensive. There are more than a hundred national unions; thousands of state, regional and district bodies; and 60,000 local unions, all administering 200,000 collective bargaining agreements around the country. Each of those units has officials responsible for financial affairs. Living in a society whose dominant value is personal enrichment, union leaders are not immune to the temptation to get theirs. What is remarkable is the low incidence of corruption in the labor movement, considering the opportunities. During the Senate hearings on the bill, government witnesses estimated that only two dozen union officials would lose their jobs if the bill passed.

On the other hand, the slightest abuse violates the trust of union members, and many abuses have been more than slight. Charges leveled against the International Brotherhood of Teamsters over the years have been well publicized. They taint its many locals and officials whose honesty and respect for union democracy are beyond question. The teamsters were expelled from the A.F.L.-C.I.O. in 1957 for refusing to subscribe to the federation's Ethical Practices Code. Ever since, it has been everyone's favorite villain.

But the rest of organized labor has its own corruption. John L. Lewis once twitted George Meany about the federation's Ethical Practices Committee: "Have you found any ethical practices yet, George?" Lewis may have been overstating the case, but publicized abuses within major A.F.L.-C.I.O.-affiliated unions and the leadership's continued tolerance of corruption within some of the smaller affiliates are still cause for concern. Workers whose unions are controlled by dishonest individuals are blocked from switching to a clean union by the federation's no-raiding policy, which bars associated unions from soliciting one another's members; meanwhile, their unions are untouched by the long-dormant Ethical Practices Committee.

But to accept this bill is to accept the proposition that only the government can clean up corruption in the labor movement. If unionists concede that point, they will admit that they cannot do the job themselves. Indeed, without a fundamental change in direction, they cannot. Only an aroused membership can clean up a union. But the labor racketeering bill substitutes the arm of the government for an aroused membership demanding honesty and accountability from its officers. As long as the members are passive, the same clique from which a corrupt official came will produce his successor. His nose may be cleaner, but that will not change the way the union conducts its affairs. The bill purports to remedy corruption without union members lifting a finger; that is its fatal flaw.

Corruption in the labor movement can be ended only through a drive for militant, democratic, class-conscious trade unionism that mobilizes the rank and file to challenge corporate power. Many of those pushing for the bill shudder at that prospect. They would rather preserve a weak, defensive labor movement than face an activist labor movement and the consequences of a real end to union corruption.

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Instead of acquiescing in the government's moves to intrude further in union affairs, labor leaders should demand action on new protections for workers who want to organize and bargain collectively. The government should reform organizing laws, cancel contracts with companies that repeatedly violate labor laws, curb plant closings and runaway shops and end the use of bankruptcy laws to avoid collective bargaining. Obviously, the political climate does not lend itself to such legislation, but labor's endorsement of the racketeering bill will not change that. It will have the opposite effect, reinforcing the notion that corrupt unions are America's biggest labor problem.

The political climate—and unionists' overall fortunes—can be changed only if labor reasserts itself as a democratic, fighting movement which defends workers' rights. Integral to such a turnaround is a commitment by labor leadership to clean up its ranks and rally behind workers who are fighting for honesty and democracy in their unions. It may appear unrealistic, but there is no alternative. If unions continue to live out a hostage syndrome, grateful to the likes of Orrin Hatch and Sam Nunn for not killing them with union-busting bills but only capturing them with a labor racketeering bill, the labor movement can never mount the challenge to corporate power that is the fundamental condition for its revival. □

BRITAIN LOSES ITS LEASE

Future Shock Hits Hong Kong

GREGORY C. STAPLE

The consistent position of the government of the People's Republic of China has been . . . that the whole Hong Kong area will be recovered when conditions are ripe.

—Chinese Foreign Ministry Press Release, September 30, 1982

November is still snake season in Hong Kong. And at stands in the old districts of Kowloon, the peninsula opposite Hong Kong's harbor, you can watch Chinese housewives choose their dinner from baskets of writhing brown and black reptiles. Once a selection is made, the proprietor plunges his hand into a basket, grasps the hapless snake just behind the head and deftly impales it on a spiked cutting board. Then a knife darts out to make an incision the length of the snake's body. The vertebrae, now exposed, are neatly peeled off and discarded, the guts scraped, the head severed and the body popped in a clean plastic bag for the waiting customer. The whole procedure takes about two minutes.

Some Hong Kong watchers, remembering the febrile days

Gregory C. Staple, a lawyer living in Washington, D.C., visited Hong Kong recently.

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of the Cultural Revolution, think that the capitalist spine of Britain's last crown colony may meet a similar end. Although China is beginning to adopt Western business practices, that trend could be reversed given the unpredictable nature of the political situation in the People's Republic. The late Richard Hughes, an astute chronicler of such turns, speculated in *Borrowed Place, Borrowed Time*, "Suppose there was a Communist command split inside China after the aging men in Peking ascend the dragon, and a warlord in Canton decided that [by communizing Hong Kong] he would prove he was more Chinese and a truer revolutionary than . . . [an] indecisive party front in Peking still scrambling for [a] leader."

For the time being, however, there appears to be a cautious optimism that the negotiations between the British and the Chinese which began in 1982 will result in the maintenance of the status quo at least until 1990—more than enough time for many fortunes to be made and enough time, perhaps, to enable Hong Kong's exploding cohort of young people (roughly 50 percent of the colony's 5.4 million people are under 20) to sense its own political power. Ultimately Beijing will have to contend with the aspirations of this new Chinese working class, raised on Western pop culture, accustomed to working for wages and used to decent housing and material comforts. That was made evident in January when thousands of young people joined a riot prompted by a two-day taxi strike, even though they had no direct stake in the outcome.

Some history is necessary for understanding Britain's latest island predicament. The ten-mile-long island of Hong Kong was settled by British opium traders in 1840. Thrust out of the continental shelf by ancient volcanoes, it has a beautiful mountainous coastline, a tropical climate and an excellent deep-water harbor on its north shore.

British legal claims to sovereignty over the island stem from the 1842 Treaty of Nanking. Consented to by the last Manchu emperor following the defeat of his troops outside Nanking, the treaty opened five Chinese ports to British merchants and ceded "the island of Hong Kong, to be possessed in perpetuity by her Britannic Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors." Twenty years later, the British acquired a toehold on the Chinese mainland under a second treaty, the 1860 Convention of Peking. That agreement granted Queen Victoria "to have and to hold, as a dependency of her Britannic Majesty's Colony of Hong Kong," approximately three and a half square miles on the Kowloon Peninsula.

The remaining land that makes up modern Hong Kong is known as the New Territories and was leased from China for ninety-nine years under a third treaty, signed in Beijing on June 9, 1898. The New Territories consist of 366 square miles, more than twelve times the size of Hong Kong Island, on the mainland to the north of Kowloon. That region provides Hong Kong with critical food supplies, water and other resources. As far as the British are concerned, only this land grant expires in 1997, since Hong Kong Island and Kowloon were ceded to Britain in perpetuity.

The Chinese see it otherwise. Beijing makes no legal distinction between the three treaties. All were extracted by force or threat of force, the Chinese say; hence, all are null and void. China's sovereignty over Hong Kong accordingly remains undiminished. Obviously, Sir Richard Evans, Britain's Ambassador to China and head of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's negotiating team, has his work cut out for him.

At stake is the fate of one of the most prosperous areas in Southeast Asia. Hong Kong's per capita income is the third highest in the region, behind Japan's and Singapore's. Unemployment is less than 4 percent and the island is host to numerous U.S. multinational corporations as well as to many companies founded in the so-called newly industrialized countries like Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea. It is a place where, as the chairman of Hong Kong's most powerful trading company, Jardine-Matheson, has said, "It is still fashionable to make a profit." With a flat 15 percent income tax, no customs duties and a compliant British administration, profit is still very much in fashion.

A visitor to Hong Kong cannot help but be struck by the profusion of material wealth. There are several shantytowns on the south side of the island, but in the rolling hills below Victoria Peak numerous Chinese estates make the mansions of Beverly Hills seem positively modest by comparison. In Kowloon, the Peninsula Hotel competes with its cross-street rival, The Regent, by chauffeuring guests in a fleet of forest green Rolls Royces; The Regent has silver Mercedes-Benzes. And every Sunday in Market Square on Hong Kong Island thousands of Philippine amahs, young women who serve as housekeepers for wealthy Westerners and Chinese, gather to share their day off.

You do not have to be a born-again capitalist to admire the drive to get ahead that is everywhere evident in Hong Kong. Walking down a street in Wanchai, near the island's central business district, you can traverse several centuries within a single block. On the street, squatting over a charcoal fire, a blacksmith hammers angle irons and split pins for local pushcarts; behind him, in an open storefront, sheet metal is cut and fabricated for cabinets; on the floor above, a sign advertises traditional Chinese ivory carvings; the third story is occupied by a small clothing shop and on the fourth, in a warren of crowded rooms, circuit boards are being stuffed with electronic components. The building is capped by a giant neon sign proclaiming the magic of Citizen brand watches.

Hong Kong's ascendancy as the world's top manufacturer of watches aptly symbolizes the colony's growing importance in the capitalist order. Watch exports in 1982 totaled approximately $900 million. As Harvard historian David S. Landes wrote in *Revolution in Time*, clock manufacturing typically has been "an agent and a catalyst in the use of knowledge for wealth and power." Landes also reports, ironically, that before the opium trade took hold, the British tried to balance their early trade with China by selling them European timepieces—with little success. In 1793, a gift of a watch from the Court of St. James's to the Emperor Ch'ien Lung produced the following response:

> The Celestial Court has pacified and possessed the territory within the four seas. Its sole aim is to do its utmost to achieve

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> good government and to manage political affairs. . . . We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country's manufactures.

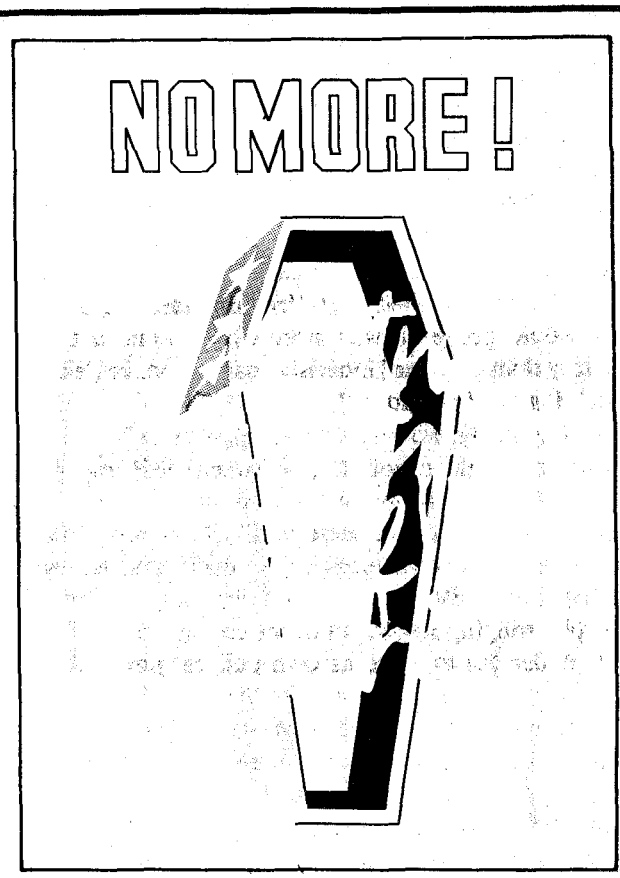
Despite the difference in rhetoric, the substance of the Middle Kingdom's negotiating posture may not have changed much since the days of Ch'ien Lung. The Chinese admit—at least privately—that trade with the West is vital to their country's economic progress. However, they find it curious that so many Westerners believe an independent, capitalistic Hong Kong is necessary for that progress, supposedly to provide China with a large proportion of its foreign exchange earnings and a trade outlet to the West. Fortunately for realists on both sides, those myths are being debunked.

Last year *The Asian Wall Street Journal* reported that China earns only about one-third of its foreign exchange by selling goods, mostly food, to Hong Kong. But even if that projection is too low, many economists estimate that China would gain more by absorbing Hong Kong's international trade earnings than it would lose in "foreign sales" to Hong Kong.

While Hong Kong does provide China with an entree to Western markets, it is also a competitor for those markets. So long as the colony remains an independent political entity, the West can play off Hong Kong's export interests against those of China. The textile industry, which produces nearly half of China's manufactured exports, is a case in point: Hong Kong textile companies' profits are often China's losses. Recently, however, China seems to be gaining the upper hand; in 1983 the Chinese signed a five-year bilateral agreement with the United States which allows it to increase its textile exports to nearly $900 million by 1985. At the same time, the Commerce Department has taken tough measures to stop Hong Kong manufacturers from dumping textile products on American markets and to hold them to their present quotas. Were China able to speak for Hong Kong, it might be able to increase net exports to the West and, perhaps more important, shift the mix of exports to favor mainland producers.

Once those facts become more widely recognized, another wave of pessimism and financial panic could sweep Hong Kong. Yet the same facts point to an eventual solution—not so much political as economic—for integrating Hong Kong into China. The island's ultimate political status and the issue of sovereignty, which the Thatcher government seems to be quietly forsaking much to the dismay of the colonial lobby in the Conservative Party, could then be downplayed, and the focus shifted to the kind of economic guarantees that would be written into Hong Kong's new charter.

There are signs that economic integration is proceeding apace. A group of private Hong Kong investors recently agreed to provide 25 percent of the $4.5 billion required to finance a nuclear power plant in Guangdong province; 70 percent of the plant's power will be sold to Hong Kong. Similarly, the Bank of China's Hong Kong office reportedly has offered financing (in Hong Kong) extending beyond the 1997 lease. An article in the December 29, 1983, *Far Eastern Economic Review* suggested that an expanded role for



"No Vietnam War in Central America" Poster by Sam Wiener

The background of this poster, a military coffin and the inscription "No More" originated during the Vietnam War and was widely circulated. Now the well-known artist Sam Wiener, angered by the Reagan Administration's war efforts in Central America, has forcefully expressed his outrage by splashing a fiery-red protest over the original.

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British companies in new Chinese development projects might also be part of a Hong Kong settlement. Britain currently has a negative trade balance with China.

Of course, the road to such economic integration is likely to have many surprises. Beijing might choose to open the "bamboo curtain" as it did in 1962, allowing a flood of Chinese to enter the New Territories from Guangdong province. Such an influx would inevitably set off a wave of immigration by healthier and richer Chinese to Australia, Canada, the United States and other Western countries. (Immigration lawyers and financial advisers are already in great demand in Hong Kong.) But the bulk of Hong Kong's new working class cannot leave—the young people who toil for McDonald's, drive taxis in Hong Kong Central, run countless sewing machines in Wanchai's back alleys and dance to David Bowie at their favorite clubs. It is the energy of that generation that will ultimately decide Hong Kong's future prosperity, whatever promises are written into the fourth Hong Kong treaty by aging men and women in London and Beijing. □

The Deficit

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

private and public borrowing needs by printing money, thus setting off inflation, or they can refuse to enlarge M-1 and all the other Ms sufficiently to meet the demand for credit. In the latter case corporations will postpone new investments, construction will be depressed by punitive interest rates and the cost of servicing the debt will rise still higher. Wall Street nervousness since January has been premised on fears of renewed inflation or imminent recession.

Nor is that the end of the bad news. Real interest rates—market rates minus inflation—are comparable to what they were in January 1981, when Jimmy Carter returned to Plains, largely because of the huge inflation premiums lenders have attached to their rates. Those rates have attracted large amounts of foreign money, which is needed for projects at home. That movement of capital has financed much of the Federal deficit and thus postponed, possibly until after election day, the clash between Treasury and private borrowing. If Reagan's luck holds, the Fed will not face its unpleasant choice between inflation and recession until early 1985.

In the meantime, however, foreign demand for dollars to invest in American securities and real estate has made the dollar so expensive relative to other currencies, notably the yen, mark and French franc, that American exporters are penalized and imports to the United States are stimulated. The trade deficit might soar to $130 billion or more by the end of this year. Here, a skeptic might interpose, What's wrong with foreigners' raising American living standards by selling us more than they purchase? Several things. For one, they may tire of the process, cease to invest in Treasur securities, take their money home and suddenly create credit shortage. For another, corporations have found th overvalued dollar a tremendously convenient pretext fc clamping a lid on wage increases and inflicting wage an benefit reductions on their employees in the name of resto ing American competitiveness in world markets. For a thirc unions historically devoted to free trade, like the Unite Automobile Workers, have been compelled to turn protec tionist simply to preserve their members' jobs. Unfortunate ly, protection in one country invites retaliation by othe and imposes unemployment on workers in industries tha live by exports.

Giant deficits distort politics as well as economic choices They restrain Democrats who seek to repair the damag Reagan has done to welfare, nutrition, housing, legal serv ices and similar means-tested programs which benefit low income families. The deficit makes traditional items on th liberal agenda such as public jobs programs and compre hensive health care seem wildly utopian. Thus it is that th presumptive Democratic Presidential nominee has retreat ed from the Kennedy-Gorman national health initiative which would control hospital cost increases, and rarely, i ever, alludes to the Humphrey-Hawkins full-employmen statute, enacted during Carter's tenure.

Reagan and his handlers took the popular side of the job issue in 1980. With some justification, Reagan excoriate the unemployment rate under Carter. Ironically, the Presi dent is now grabbing credit with both hands for a "spar kling recovery" from the deep and long recession that hi policies created. Even after fifteen or sixteen months of eco nomic expansion, unemployment is half a percent highe and a million more men and women are jobless than at th start of the Reagan Administration.

For the exceedingly cautious Fritz Mondale, budgetar disarray complicates campaign strategy. If he proposes in creased spending for education, health care and job train ing, he will be challenged in the main event by Ronal Reagan to explain just how he will pay for them and simul taneously reduce the deficit. For Mondale to evade the issu would be politically costly. But a candid answer could b just as damaging. Taxes must go up. Defense spending mus go down. If, as he may well be compelled to do, Mondal specifies the groups who should send bigger checks to th Internal Revenue Service, he will win no friends. Nor, give the President's astute manipulation of patriotic symbols will a serious diet for the Pentagon necessarily thrill unio members, particularly those in defense-related industries.

For decades, Milton Friedman has advocated that th government reduce taxes before cutting spending, on th theory that the only way to curb Congress's appetite for new ways to spend the public's money is to diminish the amoun available for it to dispense. For those who believe that th homeless enjoy slumber in the fresh air and the affluen lunch at soup kitchens, deficits are an enormous com fort. They are a menace to liberal aspirations for full em ployment, decent low-income housing and universa health protection. □

Robert Lekachman is a member of The Nation*'s editorial board and the author of* Greed Is Not Enough: Reaganomics *(Pantheon).*

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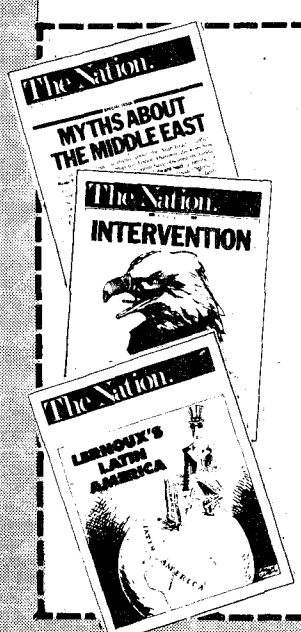

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Historians of Resistance

ELLEN CAROL DuBOIS

VISIONS OF HISTORY. *By MARHO, the Radical Historians Organization. Edited by Henry Abelove, Betsy Blackmar, Peter Dimock and Jonathan Schneer. Pantheon. 324 pp. $20. Paper $9.95.*

Visions of History is a rich but maddeningly incoherent collection of interviews with thirteen influential left-wing historians. The book began as a series in the New York City-based journal *Radical History Review*. At that point the historians interviewed were all "radical intellectuals that had come to maturity in the 1940s and 1950s": E.P. Thompson, Staughton Lynd, Eric Hobsbawm, William Appleman Williams, David Montgomery, Natalie Zemon Davis, Herbert Gutman and C.L.R. James (although James, born in 1901, really belongs to an earlier generation). Interviews with Sheila Rowbotham, Linda Gordon, Vincent Harding, John Womack and Moshe Lewin were added for the book to strengthen the material on Third World and women's history. The intent seems to have been to examine the transition between old left and New Left history by looking at the generation of historians that spanned the movements. Along the way, the editors also decided to offer a representative collection of "radical history" from the last two decades. The result is a book confused in its purpose and considerably less than the sum of its parts.

Most of the historians in *Visions of History* belong to one school of contemporary leftist history: they are students not of power but of protest. Only William Appleman Williams, who concentrates on U.S. imperialism, is primarily interested in what has kept ruling classes on top. He has influenced other leftist historians to study the varieties and mechanisms of domination; although their work does not appear in this collection, it constitutes the approach against which the historians represented here are reacting.

Labor historian David Montgomery suggests that "from the fifties onward . . . the power elite was depicted as almost omnipotent" by too many social critics, including leftists. Except for Williams, the historians in *Visions of History* are concerned with the tenacity and range of challenges to ruling classes. They write about working people contesting the moral and economic authority of capitalists, slaves struggling to be free of their masters, and women asserting the integrity of their experience as distinct from men's. That kind of history used to be called "history from the bottom up," but the phrase is no longer used much and the editors offer no alternative characterization. For the sake of convenience, I'll call this school the historians of resistance. For the sake of honesty, I'll admit I'm one of them, if often as part of the loyal opposition.

The approach to resistance taken by these historians is almost as pronounced as their aversion to a leftist history that emphasizes superior over subordinate classes. They write not about protest organizations, unions, political parties or leaders but about mass movements, popular protests and the kind of resistance that underlies what we normally call politics. "What I find myself looking for is new forms of political struggle that come out of the everyday lives of working people," writes Montgomery of his work on the history of shop floor relations. Nor are these historians primarily concerned with evaluating the impact of protest movements on the course of history. Herbert Gutman, an especially vehement critic, dismisses such questions as "determinist" and "presentist" because they "look at a period of history simply as a precursor of the moment that we currently are living in." Others interviewed echo his determination to consider the past on its own terms.

What the historians of resistance are really interested in is not the consequences but the sources of resistance. They want to know about the cultural values that have encouraged people to resist power, even (or especially) when it seems overwhelming. One after another, they talk about their impatience with "economism" and their preferenc for a more anthropological method, on which recognizes the importance c culture in explaining what keeps re sistance alive. "I think we still have lot to learn about the mediations b which groups of people, including sut ordinate groups, create what you migl call a culture, something that's deepe than style but not as deep as fundamer tal power structure," explains feminis historian Linda Gordon. In contrast t leftist history of the Williams school, i which the emphasis on ruling classes im plies their historical invincibility, th historians of resistance suggest that th possibility for protest always exists, anc therefore, so does the moral imperative "I want to show that even when time were hard, people found ways t cope with what was happening an maybe resist it," explains Natalie Ze mon Davis, who writes about sixteenth century France. "I want to be historian of hope." At its most pro nounced, the history of resistance take the inspiration of protest as both it subject and its object.

Given this emphasis on the source and inspiration of resistance, it i remarkable that *Visions of History* ha so little to say about the forces tha brought into being its own way of ap proaching history. The role played b the politics of the 1960s, which taught a entire generation to see history in term of an unquenchable spirit of resistance does not become clear until the intervie with Vincent Harding, the only Afro American represented. Harding elo quently describes being among peopl who have suddenly become consciou of their political power and historica significance:

> There was in the sixties a confluence of movements and events and developments that opened up the possibility for a real transformation of American life. The Black movement simply was the way, the opening wedge through which these issues came up. . . . The whole business of being in the midst of the people who, in many many, cases totally unconsciously, were moving the entire nation, and realizing how unsung they were, certainly . . . taught me something about what is important in history.

Other interviews provide evidence fo the centrality of racial conflict t modern American historical conscious

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Ellen Carol DuBois is the author of Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869 *(Cornell University Press) and* Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches *(Schocken).*

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ness. Montgomery, for instance, pays tribute to black historian W.E.B. DuBois as "*the* most influential scholar" in his life, a model for how a historian should serve the people. C.L.R. James, a West Indian, has been writing on this subject since the 1930s. He points out that while DuBois was studying "the role that Blacks had played in the creation of modern America," James was doing the same for the history of modern Europe. But overall, race gets short shrift in *Visions of History*. All of the nonwhite history is literally in the back of the book. Perhaps, as John Womack, who studies the Mexican revolution, suggests, "There's still something significant in difference of attention to white pain and colored pain."

But pride of place in *Visions* goes to three British historians, Eric Hobsbawm, Sheila Rowbotham and especially E.P. Thompson, who towers over the whole enterprise. Thompson's pre-eminence reflects the post-Stalinist crisis in Western Marxism, which British leftists have resolved in a way that Americans wish they could. What makes Thompson so attractive to American leftist historians is his ability to give voice to the most basic contemporary criticisms of Marxism and to remain a Marxist while doing so. Beginning in the late 1950s, Marxism as an intellectual tradition began to be shadowed by what Gutman calls "the totalitarian shroud" that covered communism. However, leftist historians found that they still needed Marxism to understand the past. In Natalie Davis's words, "It gave me a way . . . to approach the big questions that fascinated me—about class and class conflict, about how the social world related to the intellectual world, about the big motors of historical change." While the Americans found a paralyzing contradiction between Marxism as an analytical tool and communism as practical politics, the British were able to develop powerful critiques of Marxism, even as they continued to identify themselves with the Marxist tradition. Americans have been importing their Marxism ever since, and the tendency to piggyback off the British keeps American Marxism from becoming a flourishing tradition in its own right. After all these years, American leftists are still more comfortable calling themselves radicals than Marxists. All the attention paid to Thompson helps to obscure the fact that it is really Marx who is at issue. There is a debate over Marxism in *Visions of History*, but for the most part it remains under the surface.

Those are the failures of *Visions of History* as a whole. The interviews are not easy to juxtapose, and the editors provide almost no apparatus to help us. The brief introduction identifies few themes and does not even explain the criteria by which those interviewed were selected or their contributions ordered. Its tone is celebratory rather than probing or analytical.

That said, it is also true that a good number of the interviews are quite gripping. Moshe Lewin's personal saga has extraordinary historical scope—childhood in the Polish ghetto, youth as a Soviet worker, adulthood in the political battles surrounding the founding of Israel. Linda Gordon has thoughtful things to say about what it takes to write good history, in particular about how to balance the demands of the past and the present. And John Womack, who seems overwhelmed by the irony of teaching about Third World revolutions to Harvard undergraduates, expresses the frustration and *tristesse* of trying to understand an entire society in all its complexity and detail.

Other interviews, however, including

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those with Thompson, Gutman and James, cannot easily be read except as commentary on their scholarship directed toward those already familiar with it. Although almost everyone interviewed insists on the necessity of bringing history to a nonacademic audience, *Visions of History* will probably be read mostly by other historians. That is unfortunate. Why and how one think about history, and what the link is between history and politics are potentially matters of interest to a wide audience Sooner or later, those of us who mak our living as historians will find a wa to communicate what we have to say o these subjects to someone besides on another.

Mermaids in the Ballroom

JUDITH THURMAN

VITA. *By Victoria Glendinning. Alfred A. Knopf. 436 pp. $17.95.*

Victoria Glendinning has many virtues as a biographer. She is a good parent to her subjects, loving but not doting. Her prose is fluent and without pretension. She has the gift of focus—her pages are not cluttered with trivial details—and that other quality so essential to a biographer, tolerance for paradox. But she is not the kind of writer who likes, or will permit herself, to generalize from the individual life at hand to the larger human condition. "The larger human condition" is a pious phrase, and I use it with a certain trepidation. But that is what I miss in *Vita*. Glendinning wishes us to read it "as an adventure story." That is pleasant enough. But the life she recreates holds more interest than that.

Vita Sackville-West was born in 1892. It seems inevitable that she should have grown up out of scale, an impressive but rather comical figure, like one of the stone monsters in the park at Bomarzo, in Umbria. She was an only child, which may explain why she lacked a sense of proportion in regard to her feelings, powers, privileges and deprivations, and, probably more significant, she was a Sackville—on both sides. Her mother, Victoria Sackville-West, was the child of the second lord and his mistress, Pepita, a Spanish dancer. She was a woman of enormous egotism and charisma who "wounded and dazzled" Vita by turns and "threatened to take over her . . . biography with the same tragi-comic bullying charm that she exercised [upon her] life."

Vita's "Dada," Lionel Sackville-West, was his wife's first cousin and a passive, saturnine man. He had tha mistrust, so typical of his class, fo "soulies," people who expressed or re flected upon their feelings. When Vic toria unilaterally withdrew from thei sex life, he took mistresses. She foun rich protectors. It was a conventiona Edwardian marriage, bitter and selfis beneath the nonchalance.

When his uncle died, Lionel becam Lord of Knole, though the house, on feels, was the true patriarch of the fam ily. Elizabeth I bestowed Knole o Thomas Sackville in 1490. There wer alleged to be 365 rooms; there were ston leopards on the ramparts, mermaids i the ballroom, a forge and sawmill and state bedroom built for James I with a enormous silver bed—which Vita though rather vulgar, and where she brought he lovers of both sexes. She worshipe Knole. From an early age she gave th house tour to visiting mandarins an royal favorites. She explored it "mysterious glooms." She did up he tower boudoir with homemade frescoe and left the floors bare because, she ex plained, "the strong, cruel, luxurious Italy of the Renaissance" so much ap pealed to her. Vita grew up into a bookish Valkyrie, innocently bruta and saturated with the romance of he family.

"God damn this energy. Thank God for it," she wrote. Vita *was* a monste of vitality, obliged to squander none o it on the mundane tasks of living. Bu that vitality—that potency—is more in teresting than any of the projects it went into. Vita was a prolific writer—he *oeuvre* amounts to fifty-three books o poetry and prose. I haven't read any o it, and from the samples quoted b Glendinning, I don't want to. She was a famous gardener, self-taught and innovative, and her weekly newspaper columns on the subject were, in a nation with a passion for its backyards, very influential. One can still visit the

Judith Thurman is the author of Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller *(St. Martin's), which won the 1983 American Book Award for biography.*

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gardens she created at Sissinghurst, her estate in Kent, and I would like to. All the same, it is hard to care about vast monochromatic flower beds one has never seen.

Vita's most famous achievement is her marriage—to Harold Nicolson, the diplomat and author. They began as playmates, amazed to discover that such complicity could exist. There was an erotic stage to their marriage, and they had two children. Once the passion modulated to friendship, they pursued their separate homosexual interests, generally on different continents, while providing each other a "pure," "tender" and "exclusive" stability through their letters. All this has been copiously documented in letters edited and published by their son, Nigel. It is encouraging to see two difficult people continue loving each other through the years, but as Glendinning observes, "There is no need to bow the knee. . . . Many marriages are . . . as strangely and finely balanced as theirs."

Finally, there was Vita's womanizing, of which Glendinning gives us an extremely full account. She was always the seducer and the abandoner. As a child she enjoyed torturing her female playmates, tying them up behind the shrubbery and whipping their bare legs with nettles. As a young woman she ran off to the Continent with the mad Violet Trefusis, dressing as a man, registering them at hotels as husband and wife. Vita's physique disposed her to the role. She was a prince of a woman, six feet tall, with legs "like beech trees" and cheeks that were "faintly furred." She was made, as Virginia Woolf observed, to "stride, with 11 Elk hounds behind [her], through . . . ancestral woods."

Virginia Woolf, we know, was Vita's most famous conquest. She is a marginal figure in this "adventure," but her sketches of Vita leap off Glendinning's page: "Not much to my severer taste," she wrote on their first meeting. "Florid, moustached, parakeet coloured, with all the supple ease of the aristocracy, but not the wit of the artist." Virginia came to love Vita, to be jealous of her "second-rate schoolgirl" paramours, to be thrilled and terrified by the aura of risk, the vigor, the radiance that she gave out. But she could also declare, with uncompromising candor, "There's something that doesn't vibrate in you: it may be purposely—you don't let it. . . . It's in your writing, too." Vita had to agree, and Glendinning suggests that the "something" was a reticence toward her talent, insufficient "ruthlessness" and "self-abandon." But that point is not substantiated by any evidence in the book. On the contrary, Vita seems to have taken her talents, appetites and ambitions as far as they would go. She tested and exposed herself. She didn't have that all-too-common womanly conflict about success. And therein lies the real pith of this story.

Reading about Vita, you can never forget that she was a woman who was not a man. Her sexuality has a strange iridescence: tilt it one way to the light, and she is female; tilt it another way, and she is male. Neither category is adequate to describe her. Searching for an analogue, I thought of the Edwardian family in Caryl Churchill's comedy *Cloud Nine*. The characters are archetypes played by actors who switch roles and genders from act to act and in so doing arouse, exasperate, amuse, repel, move and finally confront the audience with its own deeply conditioned expectations. What was Vita? From a dramatic point of view, a wonderful piece of *trompe l'oeil*.

Mistrusting "amateur psychology," Glendinning speculates little about Vita's sexual development or motivations. She presents the facts, and readers may draw their own conclusions. One thing is obvious enough: few women have had a better or more tangible reason for penis envy. *Had* Vita been a man, she would have become Lord Sackville and inherited her beloved Knole. Instead, it passed to her wimpy cousin Eddy.

The loss of Knole is, I think, the place to plant the flag and survey Vita's adventure. It then becomes a parable about disinheritance, the forced marginality of daughters. The same arbitrary laws that excluded Vita from Knole have also determined, in the course of history, what sons and daughters are respectively entitled to learn, think, feel, act, even desire—how each sex is entitled to define itself.

Vita's real splendor was her indifference to those definitions. She moved out of Knole, but she refused to forfeit much more of her patrimony. That her life seems motivated more by arrogance than by conviction doesn't make it less impressive. She defied the laws of psychological entailment, the losses of drive and self-esteem, with a noble perversity of heart. □

Musical Lives

LINDA SANDERS

PLÁCIDO DOMINGO: MY FIRST FORTY YEARS. *Alfred A. Knopf. 256 pp. $15.95.*

MY LIFE. *By Marilyn Horne with Jane Scovell. Atheneum. 258 pp. $16.95.*

THE LATER DIARIES OF NED ROREM (1961-1972). *North Point Press. 439 pp. $15.*

When a musical luminary writes about his or her life, there is apt to be some confusion about whether the result should be categorized as an artistic memoir or a celebrity autobiography. How convenient, then, that three books have appeared this season to clarify the difference: one is a good celebrity autobiography, one is a great artistic memoir and one tries to be both but fails to be either.

Linda Sanders's articles and reviews have appeared in Saturday Review, The New York Times *and other publications.*

Plácido Domingo's *My First Forty Years* is too tasteful and restrained to be a real show biz tell-all, and too superficial to illuminate his art. The flat prose bears little resemblance to either his charismatic stage presence or his charming TV persona—even reading it out loud with that lovely accent doesn't help—and his remarks about his colleagues reveal nothing so much as the fact that he still works with them. After dispatching his childhood with stock memories of family and school, Spain and Mexico, he settles into a format that scans his career from city to city and role to role: arrive for engagement, describe; introduce famous colleague, say something nice about him or her; devote one or two sentences to other singers, one or two paragraphs to conductors, maybe more if they are (1) very, very famous, (2) frequently on the same bill or (3) Carlos Kleiber, who gets several pages.

There's some fun to be had here. Domingo usually addresses the critical popular wisdom about said colleague, though he generally stops short of the

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genuine analysis he could doubtless provide. Sometimes he tries so hard to be loyal and discreet that the results take a bizarre and perhaps unfortunate turn, as in his "defense" of Metropolitan Opera conductor James Levine: "His approach to music is very direct, and those who sometimes accuse him of not going extremely deeply into the music do not realize that he is growing at an amazing pace. A conductor at forty is still at the beginning of his career, and Jimmy himself has told me that he is not now trying to give his definitive accounts of the works he conducts." Not *trying?*

When he turns to himself, press release revelations are the order of the day. He's a professional singer, a gentleman, a loving husband and father. Period. Despite the pictures, even hardcore fans may find it difficult to justify buying this book.

Since Domingo isn't prepared to be particularly candid, he might have done better to employ the "as told to" format, as Marilyn Horne did, and let a professional writer give his life an entertaining gloss. Written with author Jane Scovell, *My Life* is women's-magazine prose, complete with italicized adjectives, but the jokes are funny and the tone is warm; the authors have bothered to concoct a story. Horne is quickly established as a Great Lady and a Ballsy Broad; she's the down-to-earth type who claims never to have forgotten her father's injunction that the only thing that makes her special is that "little piece of gristle in [her] throat."

"Call me Jackie," she begins, and we do. We follow her from the studios of Hollywood to the backwater opera company of Gelsenkirchen, West Germany; then back to the United States and triumphantly onward to the stages of La Scala, Covent Garden and, finally, the Met. Behind the scenes, there is her marriage to black conductor Henry Lewis; their child, the source of much motherly hand-wringing; the eventual divorce and current friendship.

There's even some genuine diva stuff. Nothing, in case you'd hoped there might be, between Jackie and Joan Sutherland, but a classic incident at La Scala with Beverly Sills. Jackie, it seems, caught Bubbles and a publicity man in the act of removing all the photographs with Jackie in them from the file being sent to the newspapers. Jackie told the man, "Look, I don't know what you're doing, but I'll tell you one thing: if *The New York Times* runs a picture and I'm *not* in it, I'll find you when I get back to the States and smack you right in the face, you son-of-a-bitch!"

Brava, Jackie. Brava, Bubbles. Opera does, after all, have a reputation to maintain.

Finally, for a taste of the artist's memoir in its purest form, we have composer Ned Rorem's *Final Diaries*

IN ASSISI

This morning, in Assisi, I woke
and looked into my wife's face
and thought of Saint Francis:
how he explained to Brother Leo
that Perfect Joy is only on the Cross,
how he told him that, if they should come
to the Convent of Saint Mary of the Angels,
soaked with rain and frozen by the cold
and soiled with mud and suffering
from hunger, and if they should knock
on the gates and a porter should come out
and beat them over the head with a knotty club
and throw them down into the mud and snow
and cover their bodies with wounds, only then
might they know Perfect Joy. And I thought
of how Saint Anthony converted the heretics
by talking to the fishes, and of how blood flowed
from a picture of Saint Francis's stigmata,
and of the beautiful death of Brother Bernard.
And I looked again into my wife's lovely eyes,
both green and grey at once in the Umbrian light,
and swore to myself, rolling over beside her,
that I would never be a man who flings his body
like dirt against the thorns, that I would never
lie down to sleep on a bed of stone; that,
if I were ever fit to preach to the birds,
I would sing to them in praise of their wings,
I would urge them to fly off in all directions
at once, over the trees and the hills and
the lustful bodies of small animals. And this
is how it was this morning, when—after
making love in the large bed—we walked
through the Porta dei Cappucini towards the
Eremo delle Carceri, where Saint Francis
is said to have blessed the birds, and past
the thousand-year-old oak, now supported
by steel bars, and watched the white doves
kiss atop the stone balustrade. And I looked
at my wife, and praised her body and my body
and all the bodies of this earth for what pleasure
they can give. And I bathed my eyes in salt,
as Saint Francis did, for the little love we find
and how we cling to it and how, once we find it,
we live constantly in dread of losing it, as
the Buddhists say. And I blessed this life
once more for what it has given me, and
for what it has failed to give me, and will
fail again tomorrow. And I held my wife
in these dust-driven arms and spoke to her
in this one language I know so well: the old oak
creaking in the blessed air, the pious fishes
singing in the stream, this all I know of Perfect Joy,
and all the white doves kissing in its name.

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epublished in December as *The Later Diaries*, for reasons not difficult to divine. When they originally appeared n 1974, Rorem's reputation as the nost—perhaps the only—literate *enfant terrible* of the contemporary music world had already been firmly established by his *Paris and New York Diaries*. These, however, also established him in many people's minds as the best writer the music world has produced since Virgil Thomson.

It would perhaps be well to say at the outset that many people of taste and sensibility will be as immune to Rorem's charm now as they were ten years ago. His narcissistic mood-mongering is, at least in the first part of the book, not relieved so often and so well by anecdotes of the famous and chic as it was in the earlier installments. The writing, most of which is superbly stylish, sometimes lapses into preciousness; and some thoughts are more trouble to unravel than they are worth, like eating a small fish full of bones: "Slovenly reading of an article by Lionel Trilling (whom I've always admired); I was under the impression it was by Diana Trilling (whom I've never admired), and so found it bad." There are hundreds of epigrams, bon mots, aphorisms and reverse platitudes that are strictly hit or miss: "Being in love precludes knowing about being in love." "To an alcoholic, crime and punishment occur simultaneously." "A concert: is what precedes a party." "A meal: is what precedes a cigarette." And so on.

Ten years ago the *Diaries* were also supposed to be outrageous because Rorem is frank, or fairly so, about making love with men. (I must have thought so too, since the parts I've never forgotten are a 1963 statistical breakdown of his orgasms since age 14, and the story of how he sat in an audience trying to seduce Thomas Mann, who was lecturing.) In retrospect the shocking thing was not that Rorem was homosexual but that he was a composer who was talking about sex in any form. Sexual love was a concept so divorced from the puritanical academic music that was still dominant in 1974 that any manifestation in a composer seemed aberrant.

But that's the point. As a composer Rorem never fully inhabited that milieu. He was and is a principled conservative, whose music—good and bad—has always been tonal and accessible. Whether or not you know or like Rorem's music is tangential to a reading of the *Diaries*. But people who have followed the rocky course of recent composition history will find additional and possibly ironic pleasure in reading Rorem's musical observations from the early 1960s; they sound much like what one hears today, as a younger generation of composers distances itself from that unlovable era.

Beyond that, the *Diaries* are the work of a "real" writer, not a composer/dilettante. Like many ruthless self-ex-

MUSHROOM HUNTING IN LATE AUGUST: PETERBOROUGH, N.H.

The drosophila wing of the morning moon
is still in the heavens
when, looking for the lesson in nature
we are always looking for, I walk,
basket in hand, through the damp woods,
parting the secretive ferns, twisting
my thin body among the asters and loosestrife,
checking beneath the stones and stumps
as I plunder the pine needled floor
for the chanterelles and puffballs.

It is so much like life, which is why
I love it: the delectable and the deadly
so resembling each other, the sexual rise
of the false morel a mere flirtation,
and the sweet viscosity we'd like to swim in
an elegy to movement. Holding a knife
in my right hand, I work from the base,
cutting beneath the stipe, recording
in my small book the particulars
that separate delicacy from demise, hallucination
from the smaller contentments of mere vision.

Finally, placing each in its own small bag
and into my basket, I wend my way back
through the mossy woods to my soft chair,
to the embering fire where, with my book
and my magnifying glass, I start to separate,
because separating is, in the end, what this
is about: the doubtful from the certain,
the brief scintillations of beauty
from the urge for survival. Some, in fact,
are so beautiful I would like, this very moment,
to taste them: to feel pale, red flesh
and feathery gills take on their sexual softness
beneath my tongue, but I am thinking again
of what my friend's psychiatrist said about women:
Just because they're beautiful and you're hungry,
doesn't mean you have to eat all *of them.*

Until at last, what began as a large harvest
is merely a small bundle of certainty and safety.
and I sit there with my three piles of caps
and stems, of torn gills and the bruised flesh
of holiness and nature. Loving what little
I know for certain, I gather
the smallest pile toward me. *Oh life,*
I say to myself, *so this is what you are.*
I stumble out into the sunlight.
I pucker my lips at the morning moon.

And I eat.

Michael Blumenthal

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aminers, Rorem's direct, "honest" questioning of himself seems ultimately to be a game, all illusion and brilliant trickery; it's when he turns his gaze outward that we begin to see what makes him tick. The book contains innumerable opportunities for quotation, illustrating his acute intelligence and flair: reports of conversations with the witty and wise; haughty, trenchant, annoying observations about literature, music, film, artists, politics. But in homage to its status as a cult classic, I will reproduce the punch line of a favorite, if atypically surrealistic, passage, which has him standing in line at the Food City checkout:

> To kill time, I took from the counter rack a copy of *Family Day*. The soft colored pages opened themselves to the photograph of a goody which gave me pause. My passion for sweets begins to know no bounds, and here loomed a swooning mound of pink fluff named Iced Grape Soufflé. After perusing the recipe I stopped breathing.
>
> Dissolve: 1 package Concord Grape Jello in 1 cup boiling water
> Add: 1 package frozen red grapes, strained 1 cup freshly squeezed grape juice
> Chill for one-half to three-quarters of an hour
> Fold in: 1 cup heavy cream, whipped with cinnamon and white of one egg 1 to 2 teaspoons framboise liqueur 1 cup blood
>
> I "came to" on Columbus Avenue one block north of the store, halfway home and no one stared. . . . Where and in what condition I had lingered between fainting and moving here now, I do not know and may never learn. □

In Their Own Words

THULANI DAVIS

HOME GIRLS: A Black Feminist Anthology. *Edited by Barbara Smith. Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. 377 pp. $10.95.*

Some years ago Barbara Smith caused an uproar at the National Conference of Afro-American Writers at Howard University by by presenting a paper that characterized relationships between women in classic black novels as lesbian. The college teachers and writers in the room shouted or held their breath in shock; psychologists jumped to their feet to object. What Smith gave those cherished books—some written by the male "protest writers" of the 1940s, some written by the female writers just gaining acceptance in the 1970s—was an exegesis that placed in center stage relationships that are merely peripheral in the novels. Smith's "lesbianism" was basically the closeness and mutual support one often finds among women who are brutalized by life, but the word itself brought alarm. How could something lesbian, however amorphous, step out of black culture's shadows and into the acknowledged landmarks of our genius? Few analysts of black literature had ever spent much time worrying about what those women in the novels might have been doing anyway.

Two books that came out last year have gone a long way toward unveiling the lives and culture of black lesbians. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* treat as natural that which has been considered an aberration and allow the reader to see the function of women's culture in black life. Because that culture has been so peripheral, or even hidden, in literature, and because its exposure startles so many scholars and critics, *Home Girls*, a collection of writing mostly by black lesbians, is an important resource.

Home Girls is a wildly uneven book, but it still puts you on the spot. Much of the material is raw, written by women who have yet to master the craft of writing. It flashes with the bitterness caused by class and color differences in the black community and by the violence visited so regularly on black women. But it is unusual for its attention to those issues and for the space it gives to political and literary questions. As several of the essays in the book clearly demonstrate, the lesbian voice in black literature, even in anthologies of black women writers, is still not considered mainstream reading. One article points to that omission in *Black Eyed Susans, Midnight Birds* and *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, but it would be easy to cite most other anthologies as well. Black lesbian writers today are not so obscure that book people can say they "don't know any," so one has to assume that their writing is still too challenging, either in its rhetoric or its emotion, for the taste of most editors.

Home Girls opens the door for a broad examination of black women's culture by including fiction, nonfiction and poetry, much as small magazines (*Conditions, Heresies, Sinister Wisdom, Off Our Backs, Azalea*) have done for years. Most of the material, in fact, is taken from *Conditions: Five, The Black Women's Issue*. But even at that, *Home Girls* makes clear how much more there is to be done. With the exception of the introductory essay by Smith, the nonfiction pieces could have been more thorough, could have examined their subjects more closely. Among the poets in the anthology, June Jordan, Patricia Jones, Alexis DeVeaux and Deidre McCalla are the only ones who exercise rigorous control of thought, tone and line. Cheryl Clarke, who is represented by her prose, should have been included as a poet; her collection, *Narratives: Poems in the Tradition of Black Women* (also published by Kitchen Table), has plenty of good stuff that's just right for this book. Some of the poets represented in *Conditions: Five* might have had a place here too—particularly straight feminists, few of whom appear.

The editorial priorities of *Home Girls* are outlined in Smith's essay, which discusses the simultaneous oppressions—"sexual, racial, economic and heterosexist"—suffered by many women of color, the myths that have dogged black feminism for decades and the priorities demanded by nationalist movements: "An irony is that among Third World people biological determinism is rejected and fought against when it is applied to race, but generally unquestioned when it applies to sex." Smith posits as new the idea of serious coalitions among Third World women, while many of us—and some of those in the book—know it is an old and comfortable way of working in the world. Bernice Johnson Reagon, the activist scholar and lead singer of Sweet Honey in the Rock, rightfully and soulfully ends the book with a discussion of coalitions:

Thulani Davis is a senior editor at The Village Voice.

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It must become necessary for all of us to feel that this is our world. . . . The "our" must include everybody you have to include in order for you to survive. You must be sure you understand that you ain't gonna be able to have an "our" that don't include Bernice Johnson Reagon, cause I don't plan to go nowhere! That's why we have to have coalitions. Cause I ain't gonna let you live unless you let me live. Now there's danger in that, but there's also the possibility that we can both live—if you can stand it.

A transcribed talk between Smith and Cenen, a Latina, "The Blood—Yes, the Blood: A Conversation," seems particularly naïve next to Reagon's awareness that cross-cultural dialogue takes years of committed wrangling. "Black Lesbian/Feminist Organizing: A Conversation," between Tania Abdulahad, Gwendolyn Rogers, Barbara Smith and Jameelah Waheed, has little to say about how to reach out to Latin, Asian, Native American and other women of color, how to relate to straight women, how to deal with issues of class. But it is a needed discussion and one that will have to include a large circle of women.

The personal stories—and all the work in the book is, in a sense, personal narrative—are compelling and moving. The most eccentric and delightful is a piece on voodoo by Luisah Teish, "Women's Spirituality: A Household Act." Teish unabashedly mixes historical research with personal experience and even visions, concluding with a compendium of home remedies and voodoo practices. Teish turned an at-hand cultural base into a means of self-expression, which is, of course, the job facing all black feminist writers. Lorde has perhaps succeeded at this task more than many, most recently in her *Zami*. "Tar Beach," an excerpt from the novel, included here, describes casual encounters among black lesbians at bars and house parties in the 1950s and a tender relationship that finds a home in a West Side tenement.

The four essays on the place of black lesbians in American literature should have been longer and covered more ground—particularly Ann Allen Shockley's piece, which includes some notes on very recent work and Jewelle Gomez's hilarious accounts of drugstore novels about black lesbians. Taken together, they show why lesbian writers have to be given their due, along with the rest of black writers. *Home Girls* is a step in that direction. □

DANCE.

MINDY ALOFF

A Schubertiad
The Tap Dance Kid

A Schubertiad, Peter Martins's most recent work for the New York City Ballet, has much of technical interest to recommend it, and it's beautifully danced, but as theater it's mild as milk and audience reaction has been cold. The score is piano music by Schubert (played onstage in period costume primarily by Gordon Boelzner), and the setting refers one to the *Schubertiaden* of early nineteenth-century Vienna, soirees during which Schubert would perform his piano works for friends. There are two scenes: one in a music room or salon of Schubert's time, and the other in a garden. A party of sixteen dance and flirt in the salon; outdoors, under the moon, they reconvene, and their flirtations take on a more intimate tone.

Many of these figures are familiar from Balanchine and Robbins ballets: the couple united in revery, the spurned beauty, the odd man out, the knight who refuses to choose between two ladies, the coquette who equivocates between two gallants. Among the things that mark them as Martins's own are the ways the men and women treat one another. Although in many of his ballets Martins fleetingly suggests, through severely partitioning designs, an essential and unbridgeable chasm between the sexes, his people are generally gregarious. Once they bring themselves together, his couples are completely at ease. Close partnering, the man's arm around the woman's waist, is a stylistic given. There is no point of introduction, of hesitancy, of acknowledgment that to take someone's hand might be understood as an act of intrusion. In contrast to Balanchine's figures, and, to a lesser degree, Robbins's, Martins's inventions have no surrounding buffer zones, no sacred "personal space." This relative lack of formality may have to do with the kind of partnering Martins often explores: close in, with subtle exchanges of weight and little that's flagrantly acrobatic. In this low-key context, the moment when Kyra Nichols is lifted high by Ib Andersen and Joseph Duell looks like rape.

Largeness and daring are no longer natural to the world of Martins's ballets. They are rude news. Martins can craft breathtaking phrases based on the delicacy with which a ballerina passes from full point to half point, working her foot with the flexibility and control most of us have only in our hands, but even someone with his

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knowledge of technical nuance seems unable to make formal drama out of it without something huge and headstrong as a balance.

Federico Pallavicini's set designs don't give the dance the support they might. Their watercolor effect is pleasing, yet at the most important moment—the transformation from indoors to outdoors—the sets look efficient and obvious when they ought to be surprising and magical. Chenault Spence's lighting provides extravagant color, but its pinks, peaches and purples suggest neither twilight nor dawn, and the drastic dimming of the lights between the scenes was so disorienting that, at both performances I attended, people seated around me thought the piece was over and left.

In *The Tap Dance Kid*, the musical at the Broadhurst Theatre that opened to dampening reviews but has kept itself going on word-of-mouth excitement, there's a number called "Dance If It Makes You Happy" in which Willie, the 10-year-old protagonist, dreams he's performing tap routines amid his heroes from the past. For a black child obsessed with what is essentially a black art form, his heroes include a fair number of white dancers; the Nicholas Brothers and Bill Robinson are represented, but so are Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse. The idea of the dance is good: that, through a tap tradition, Willie can establish links to the past and reaffirm his identity as a dancer. It was probably no accident that the show's choreographer, Danny Daniels, surrounded Willie with his heroes as if they were totems or ancestral ghosts.

However, "Dance If It Makes You Happy" doesn't realize its idea in dance terms; the audience never sees Willie learn a new rhythm or trade steps with his dream heroes. We never see the process by which tap historically has been transmitted. Willie lays down some iron, but he really remains a member of today's audience. He's a middle-class kid who knows what good dancing is—his bedroom walls are papered with posters of Michael Jackson and Astaire (in *The Belle of New York*), but he doesn't yet know what good *tap* dancing is. Hinton Battle, a marvelous dancer and the star of the show, is supposed to represent Willie's ambitions as the child's tap dancer-choreographer Uncle Dipsey. He doesn't, though, because he's a full-bodied jazz and modern dancer, not primarily a tapper Battle is most electrifying in jumps and turns and especially kicks—he's more flexible than any of the showgirls in this musical.

Forty-fourth Street is full of tap. On the same block as the Broadhurst are *42nd Street*, *A Chorus Line* and *My One and Only*. Even though *My One and Only* is being marketed on images of Tommy Tune and Twiggy rather than the virtues of dancing, the show does feature tap master Honi Coles. Coles's dancing won him a Tony, yet try to find his name in any of the ads. Why more hoopla isn't being made over his presence here is a good question for the Great White Way.

One of the best evenings of tap in New York recently featured, in part, dead artists. I speak of a film program called "The Black Tradition in Tap Dancing," part of the wide-ranging Filmdance Festival organized by Amy Greenfield and Elaine Summers of the Experimental Intermedia Foundation and held at the Public Theater in December. The host of the program was Ernie Smith, a jazz enthusiast and film collector whose private archives were the source of the rare footage, which he has now transferred to tape and donated to Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Particularly striking about the great dancers—Bill Robinson, the peerless John Bubbles—was how relaxed their limbs looked, and how strong their waists and lower backs. The qualities for which one admires them—lightness, precision, elasticity, rhythmic sophistication, the illusion of spontaneity in the course of a set routine—link them to fine dancers of other traditions. Watching Heather Watts and Kyra Nichols execute the feathery point steps of *A Schubertiad*, I thought of Robinson in one of Smith's clips, a dance scene from the 1932 movie, *Harlem Is Heaven*. During the course of the dance he performs a step called "wings." It's a step recognizable to anyone who's endured a Saturday children's tap class. The feet flick away from each other like elevator doors opening, then dive back to rest side by side; as they fly, they make a sound. Many dancers who perform wings turn the move into something as large as the span of a Boeing 707. Robinson traces a figure so sharp and airy that the camera has to dive down near his shoelaces to catch it. In the shimmering light, the wings of a butterfly. □

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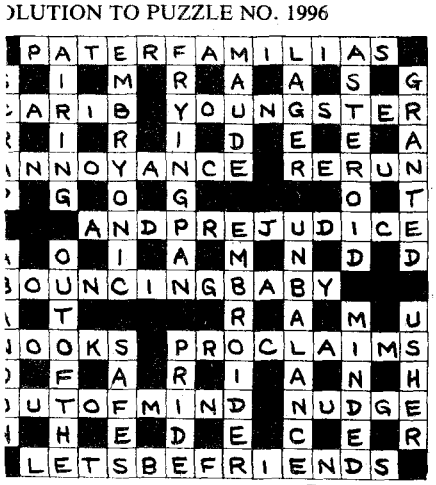

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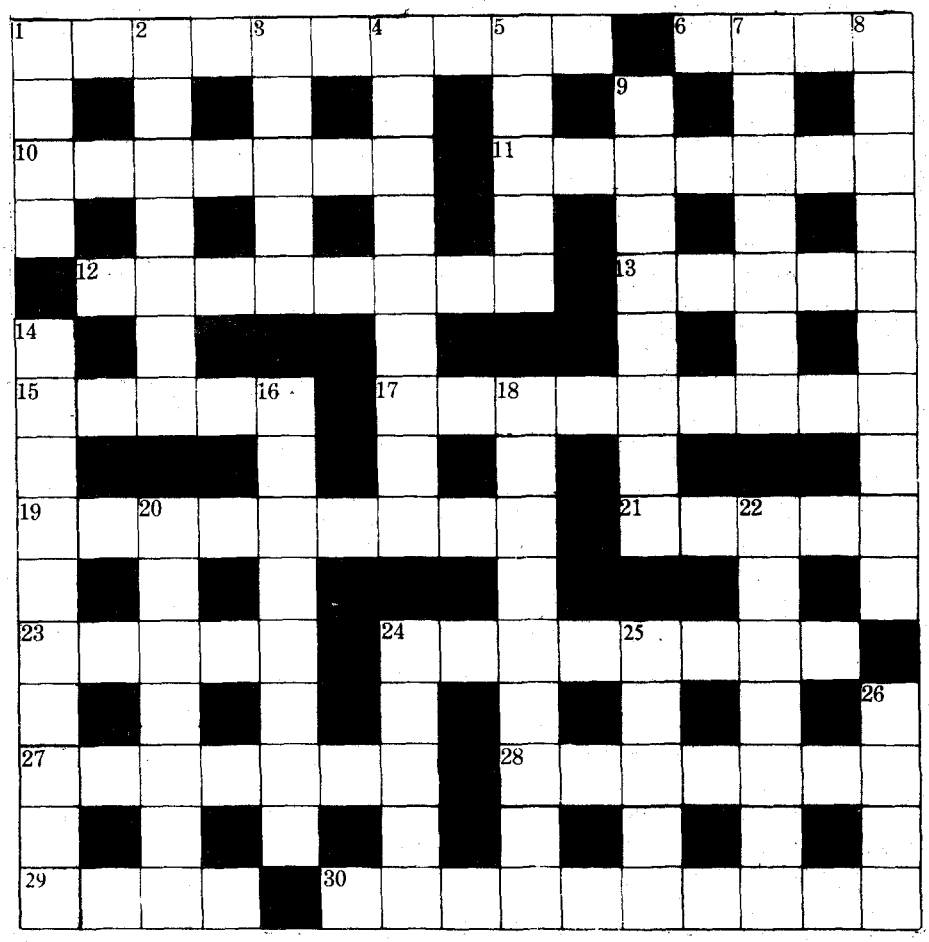

ACROSS

1 Was nothing changed where Reagan operated? (10)
6 With nothing like a lower Africa organization, exchange what sounds like bare feet coming back. (4)
10 Our own uncle keeps wrecked cars inside, which might be a put-down. (7)
11 Make repayment of a note? Really, as the Brit might say! (7)
12 Jack, for example, is a loud one with his auto—a classic 500. (4,4)
13 Is not exactly let out of carpet material, perhaps. (5)
15 Leans to one side—on the back of one's feet. (5)
17 It shouldn't be very popular, but it made the Hit Parade! (9)
19 Not a regular performance, but it's genuine as one listens for its heart. (9)
21 What the widow might get when the medico is about to be in the red. (5)
23 The test obviously involves trail-breaking. (5)
24 Taken in by some considered immortal? (8)
27 You might get a swell feeling if you are, but be told a different version. (7)
28 One who might not get credit for being an account examiner? (7)
29 In certain areas of London 15 might be slippery. (4)
30 A spell of music for those who like Wagner? Such a time! (4,6)

DOWN

1 and 22 A sort of 6 gets wasted, by the sound of it. (Women liked to be so at one time.) (4-7)
2 It isn't a lady that comes up certain about it, but they sometimes tell you to list it first. (7)
3 Empty in one quarter. (5)
4 Of higher frequency than X when mother goes up and down in certain colors. (5,4)
5 It's nothing to one on the far left, but you might get paddled this way. (5)
7 What starts with 13? Something to do while you're working with song! (7)
8 They might claim to be rulers, but represent (albeit poorly) only about 500. (10)
9 Didn't look open-eyed, certainly! (8)
14 Such people might be giving away a broken chair and some other furniture (10)
16 Everything in small portions of drink might be served with salad. (8)
18 Trains to be entered at its call. (3,6)
20 Its application gave a meaning to anti-macassars. (4,3)
22 See 1 down
24 That's what you hear on TV! (5)
25 Some associate it with the law, but it might be something you have to follow. (5)
26 The fight for which I'd get away from the time of 30. (4)

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